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Hidden Brilliance: Appreciating Unconventional (and autistic) Minds

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By **Neffe Kerr**, April 1, 2016 at 1:59 am

On the Inside

"You talk too much" he said to me with disdain.



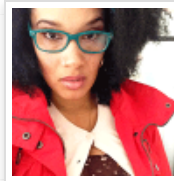
Artwork by Audrey Niffenegger

Indeed. At times I do, but its hard not to when you have a million thoughts firing off in your head at the speed of light every other nano-second. So that's why I started to write, because I realized, that everyone in your immediate surroundings are not always going to want to hear what you have to say all day and night, all of the time (but that there would be others who would).

Ever since I was young, my imagination has always been off the richter scale. Where most people have become adults and their imagination waned, mine has only seemed to grow stronger. I live in my head and often times can't sleep because of all of the thoughts and ideas that simply will not let me rest. This has always been the case, for as long as I can remember. I would wake up out of my sleep to sketch, draw, or write. I HAD to read something, make something, just do anything or else I wouldn't be able to go back to bed. This usually worked

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Neffe Kerr

I write, which means I will live forever. So basically that makes me a vampire.

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against me because I'd work on something until it was time to either get ready for school or work (as I got older). This is still the case. There are over 100 memos on my phone dedicated to ideas and plans that I absolutely must write down when they come to me. Many times I wake up out of my sleep just to input them. It used to frustrate me greatly, but I have learned to accept how my mind chooses to work.

Some would think being so 'gifted' and creative would be a great thing (which it is). I am very grateful in regards to creativity, but it can also be a double-edged sword. You see, for me, it is incredibly hard to focus on one thing at a time. I do finish many projects and meet my deadlines (because I like getting paid), but rarely can I ever simply do one thing at a time. Like now for instance, I am writing this article, but I am also going back and forth between another article and proposal that I am writing (because that is the way my mind works). I am currently reading 4 different books as well as learning new versions of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and Salesforce. I am working on my Spanish so that I can move on to learning Portuguese. Most of the time I need complete silence to work or create because of all the "noise" in my head. Good noise, creative, talented noise... but noise nonetheless (when I'm not singing while I work). That is why my nocturnal self is happiest between 12am-4am. This is because this is when the world seems quiet and I can hear myself think... somewhat.

I haven't been tested for adult ADHD or anything like that, but I do know that my mind doesn't work like others. While I struggle at times, I do see the blessing in being mentally multi-faceted even when it is challenging. For me, writers block is not simply writer's block. It's everything block. It's being unable to write, paint, sew, or create ANYTHING. On the flip side, it can be just as bad when I am in a very creative space because the creativity hits me all at once (in every area). I HAVE to do everything, which can result in a lot getting started but not as much actually being finished at the same time (even though it all still gets finished at some point). I am not writing this for all you WebMd all-stars or Psychology 101 students to entertain yourselves by trying to diagnose me with something. You can miss me with that shit.

Hidden Brilliance

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I am writing this for those of you out there who may feel like this as well. I am writing for anyone whose mind processes differently. This article is dedicated to those of you who do deal with ADHD and the countless children diagnosed with autism (who are constantly misunderstood). I want you all to know that it is okay if your mind is not like some conventional oven

(only baking up the shit people tell you is valuable). I want parents of autistic children to be able to shed the shame that they sometimes experience because other people do not understand their children.



You see, people are so quick to assume a kid is just being bad, rude, or spoiled. They rarely consider that maybe the child is autistic and experiencing a sensory overload. Compassion is key. Sometimes, having a different perspective is the best thing. A different mind is actually what makes you more special and

more innovative. Personally, I happen to think people with autism are the quiet geniuses among us. The rest of us simply haven't unlocked the language in which to communicate with them. Some people mock folks who stutter and assume they are mentally delayed, but I'm willing to bet that they are so intelligent that their mouths simply cannot keep up with the speed of their thoughts. At least that's how I see it.

My point is, even if you have certain physical, emotional, or mental challenges, YOU get to decide if something is a hindrance or a gift, no one else. You can find how to work with it and let it enhance you versus define you (according to someone else's lackluster perspective). So do that and let your brilliance show. You don't have to keep it hidden, it's what makes you special.

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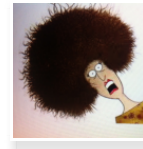
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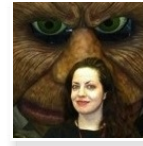
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