



Autistic People Discussing Neurotypicals

- I'm a disabled worker. I work in a social center. I clean. I'm sad because I don't get along with my colleagues. They think I'm a retard because I have a speech impediment.
- You're not a retard. You speak 14 languages.
- But all with the same accent, like a retard, you see.

- The other day a neurotypical colleague showed me a photo of his baby. He asked what I thought. I simply answered the question. It looked like an old fatty with a squashed face. I think he was annoyed.

- Sometimes it's hard to be with neurotypical people.
- They're sensitive. You must learn to tread carefully.
- I don't see why I should. I have autism, but it's not a shameful disease. Actually, it's not a disease at all. You risk burning out by trying to adapt.
- I'll always be autistic, and I don't want to change.

- When I commit, it's always 100%. I don't do things by halves. It's always black or white, never grey. I expect others to do the same and I'm often disappointed.

- Words are important to us. They describe reality, relate to images. When we say something, it's solid. I sometimes feel that words are vague to neurotypicals.
- They use idle phrases.
- What use are idle phrases? How are we supposed to know they are idle? Idle phrases are meaningless. So how can we trust them?

- I realize how wrongly I perceive other people's intentions. So, I'm always cautious about being tricked. Of being too naïve. I've been trapped so often.

- All neurotypicals talk about themselves in order to connect.
- It's absurd. I don't see the point.
- I don't see the utility of exchanging personal data. I'm more at ease talking about my interests. It's more logical.

- A secret is safe in autistic hands, as long as you make it clear it is one. Sometimes with neurotypicals it's not clear.

- When I'm sad, I prefer to be left alone. The best way to help me is not to help me.

- Fear would be irrational.

- I have a serious problem. Today is my boss' birthday. She's celebrating in a bar this

- evening. I am invited and said I'd go. One doesn't refuse such occasions.
- But the prospect of being alone among strangers in an unfamiliar place. How could she do such a thing to you?
 - We need to regard her boss' gesture as a friendly one.
 - Really? Friendly? I don't get it.
- Then there's the gift. I pondered the matter all night. Spending too much is inappropriate, not enough is disdainful.
 - I read that with gifts, you must see through their eyes.
 - Through their eyes? That couldn't be harder.
 - If seeing things through someone else's eyes is too hard, then you could try: What does this person mean to me?
- I have been a criminologist for 20 years. I know all the ways that people can murder each other. I just don't know why they do. It doesn't make sense.
- The corroborating evidence suggests that a man is courting me. His comments seemed particularly bizarre.
 - That's how it works. Smitten neurotypicals often say one thing to mean another.
 - Strange.
 - Yes, very strange.
- Have you ever had feelings for someone that are more than strictly professional?
 - I don't know.
- In romantic relationships, neurotypicals do everything they can to avoid saying what they really mean. They beat around the bush and hint at what they want. They assume the other person will understand the implied meaning.
 - This doesn't work on us. If you want something from an autistic person, you have to say so.
- Everyone deals with death in his own way. My brother was very important to me. I still haven't processed it.
 - When my father died, I didn't know how to react. I didn't cry. That shocked many people. But it was a misunderstanding.
 - Like in "The Outsider", our reactions can sometimes lead to misunderstanding with neurotypicals.
- In an impressionist painting, neurotypicals see a landscape. Autistic people see blocks of color.
 - Neurotypicals lose details in the overview. It's our burden, but it can also be our strength.
 - The world needs people like us, who see only strokes of color, not the landscape.
- Difference is a concept. A totally different concept that changes according to the society.
 - That's true. Where I'm from, being born different is lucky. I'm Cheyenne.
 - It's true that among Amerindians, it's lucky.
 - In some cultures, autism is linked to witchcraft.
 - When I was young, I was called a witch.

- Back home we're considered sick people.
- In the West of France right now it's a bit of a lottery for us.

- I am concerned that I don't feel things.
- This is an issue for all of us.
- A neurotypical told me that there are different ways to feel. You may not look at a flower as you walk by, but still appreciate the poetry it embodies.
- I don't like poetry. I don't understand how it is moving.
- Me neither. Poetry doesn't make me feel anything. But nature ... nature is powerful and captivating. Last time I walked in the countryside, I saw a sunset and I cried. I don't know why.
- I'm indifferent to sunsets. It's the angle the rays travel through the atmosphere.