

Ask an Aspie

by BJ Wanlund
Staff Writer

Asperger's syndrome (or AS) is an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that is characterized by awkward social interaction and specific interests and activities. AS has no general delay in language or cognitive development.

Now while the standard diagnostic criteria doesn't mention motor clumsiness or atypical use of language, although they are frequently reported.

Asperger's syndrome was named after a German fellow named Hans Asperger who, in 1944, described children in his practice who lacked nonverbal communication skills, failed to demonstrate empathy with their peers, and were physically clumsy.

Because of Mr. Asperger, AS is sometimes called "Little Professor Syndrome" because Asperger called his young patients "little professors".

An Aspie is one who has Asperger's syndrome, and who wouldn't trade their life for a normal (or "neurotypical") person's life...sometimes. Sometimes, an Aspie would like to trade their life for a neurotypical person's...especially in the romantic department.

Most Aspies, as I mentioned earlier, have problems demonstrating empathy. But, as I like to say, I dare to be different. I actually have quite a bit of empathy.

When I discovered this last summer, my mother told me a story about when a friend of ours named Ise (now dead) came over for an astrological reading and I started screaming and bonking my head into the



wall.

This happened a couple more times until my mother asked Ise whether she felt like she wanted to scream and bonk her head into the wall. And Ise said yes!

So I've been really trying harder to have more empathy for my peers, while at the same time trying to keep it in check. It's a really delicate balance that requires me to pay attention at all times. I'm still having difficulty doing that, as some of you may know.

And I wish to dispel a common myth right here: It is NOT always fun to be an Aspie. As I mentioned, the romantic department is a tad bit rough. For me, it's been heartache after heartache. I know that sounds weird, but it's true. Most of the relations with women that I have had have been strictly platonic, and it's really grating on me.

So, if you want to ask me a question, just email me at wanlunjw@brevard.edu with the subject line "Ask an Aspie". I'll make sure to give you credit in some fashion in each column for each question that is asked of me.

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