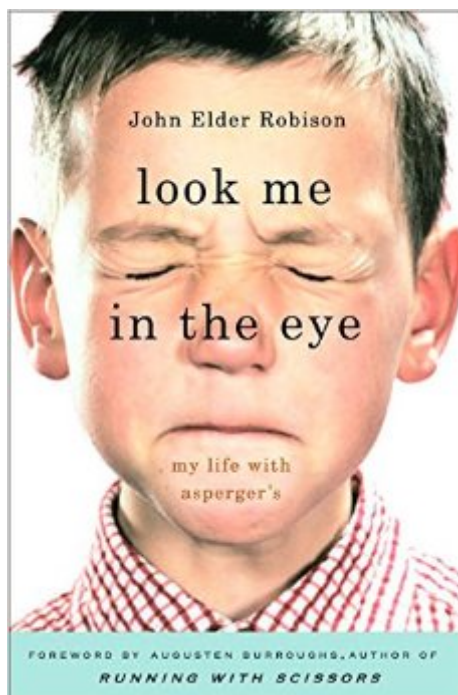


The book was found

Look Me In The Eye: My Life With Asperger's



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • As sweet and funny and sad and true and heartfelt a memoir as one could find. • "from the foreword by Augusten Burroughs Ever since he was young, John Robison longed to connect with other people, but by the time he was a teenager, his odd habits—an inclination to blurt out non sequiturs, avoid eye contact, dismantle radios, and dig five-foot holes (and stick his younger brother, Augusten Burroughs, in them)—had earned him the label "social deviant." It was not until he was forty that he was diagnosed with a form of autism called Asperger's syndrome. That understanding transformed the way he saw himself—and the world. A born storyteller, Robison has written a moving, darkly funny memoir about a life that has taken him from developing exploding guitars for KISS to building a family of his own. It's a strange, sly, indelible account—sometimes alien yet always deeply human.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's by John Elder Robison mainly because I was

enticed by reviews and interviews to explore the mind of someone who (because of Asperger's Syndrome) thinks a bit differently from us so-called "regular" folks. The book centers on John's struggle to become socially and economically successful as a person with Asperger's Syndrome. His condition wasn't diagnosed until he turned 40. The two main things about this book that stood out for me (from beginning to end) were: (1) Mr. Robison doesn't give many clues about how he expects the reader to react to his stories. In other words, you get to make your own judgments - whether about his legal and illegal pranks or about his decision to not get involved with groupies (for two examples). He doesn't spend much time defending his behavior and he isn't dogmatic about what's right and what's wrong. (2) He thinks a lot and in unusual ways. As I read about his sometimes-elaborate thought processes, I remembered what a friend told me long ago: "If you're confused, good! It means you're thinking!" And I pondered some of the social conflicts in my own life caused by what others have characterized as "thinking too much." In chapter 26 "Units One Through Three," Mr. Robison hilariously describes in frank terms the thought processes he went through when choosing his wife. ("Choosing" isn't the right word, but I promised myself I wouldn't write any spoilers into my review.

People who suffer from Asperger's Syndrome view the world through very different eyes than do normal people. Things that seem perfectly mundane to normals take on a whole new appearance when someone with Asperger's looks at them. Aspergians (a term coined by Robison) do not pick up on the social cues and body language other people do. They don't think things that most people perceive as important matter; and things they believe are of vital importance are seen as inconsequential by normals. Think for a minute about the sound of nails on a chalkboard. To many normals, the sound is something to make you grit your teeth and wish for its absence. To Aspergians, the sound can range from absolutely intolerable to pleasant, depending on how their particular affect of the syndrome perceives it. This difference in perception is one reason it's so hard for Aspergians to relate to the world. John Elder Robison has given us a solid look at what it's like to be an Aspergian. He points out that the syndrome gives as well as takes. Although he had a difficult time as a child and adolescent only partly due to his Asperger's (he was afflicted with a pair of nutcase parents, which is the last thing anyone with Asperger's needs), his gifts for 'hearing' a sound and then being able to construct devices to make that sound a reality gave him successful careers as a tech wizard working with the sound systems and instruments of the rock group KISS, among others; and a successful career (as defined by the mundanes) as an engineer for Parker Brothers in the very early days of electronic games and early game consoles.

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