

## **My Journey through Aspergers**

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For 20 years, I didn't have the diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome—though I did have a Specific Learning Disability—Auditory Processing Disorder. I was diagnosed with a learning disability at the age of seven; my mom, a Special Education Teacher, knew before I entered school that I had a learning disability. Also, as a young kid, my family knew that my hearing was super sensitive. My Grandma remembers one time when we went into the movie theater and I ran out holding my ears and screaming, but the sound of the movie didn't bother her...only me.

As a kid, I always knew I was different. In elementary school and even into middle school, I had this "reason" as to why I was different than everyone was—because I was from planet *Zeebo*. The other children believed me until we got older, and then they used it to tease me. I used to make up reasons as to why I did or didn't do something because I didn't know why. I disliked lying, but I felt it was best for me to create rationalizations for my behavior—not just for them for myself as well.

I was in and out of psychiatric hospitals during my senior year of high school, and doctors spit out at me various diagnoses like Chinese stars. My Grandpa was worried about me and shared some things I was going through to an acquaintance at his work. He told my Grandpa that it sounds like Aspergers. My Grandpa didn't want to overwhelm my Mom with another diagnosis, so he never told us. It wasn't until I got the diagnosis years later with a psychiatrist who knew what she was talking about.

In 2009, I met my psychiatrist who I still see now. She brought up Aspergers when we first met, but I just kind of pushed it away. I never heard of it. She kept bringing it up here and there, and she finally said, "You have Aspergers." I had been diagnosed with so many things that I didn't know what I had. I listened to what she had to say, and went back home to do some research about Aspergers since I'd never heard of it. I kept reading and reading about it, seeing certain characteristics of me but not enough to say I had Aspergers. I asked her, "How can I have Aspergers if my language was delayed, and I'm if not that smart?" I realized it was because I have Aspergers mixed with a learning disability—there is a difference.

At this point, a switch went off in my mind, and I decided to read about Asperger traits in females, and bam! I saw myself in these descriptions. I was never so ecstatic about a diagnosis before. As I find new things that I find interesting, I get really obsessive about learning about Aspergers and those on the spectrum. I found out that there are so many other people like me who had similarities to me; of course we are all different—all individuals.

I then joined wrongplanet.net, a website made by Alex Plank for those on the Aspergers spectrum. I asked questions, answered questions, and got really involved. I also started watching movies involved with those on the spectrum. I also started picking out "Aspie traits" in people on television shows and in those who I have met. All in all, I found myself.

This diagnosis gave me reasons for and acceptance of who I am as a person. It gave me the positive attitude that I will not let it define me as a person, though I do define it as a diagnosis. I don't let Aspergers define me as a human being despite the fact that it is still an important factor of who I am. I accept and love who I am, and I wouldn't accept any "cure" for Aspergers. I'm not suffering from Aspergers. This is what I know, this is who I am.