

## Seven Things Thomas Wants You to Know

(Updated 06/28/15)

### Note from Thomas:

As I was doing the Fifty Things Page for this site, I got to realizing that none of that information was going to help me. Yes, it may help you to know me better, but what is a personal site for if not to get into people's faces who just don't get it?

Everywhere I go, there are people who don't get it. Most of the time it is innocent. It is a bit annoying (sometimes more than a "bit" annoying) but understandable because I know that I am not like they are, or like you are. I have ten fingers and ten toes and that is where the similarities end with us. I have worked hard over the years to pretend to be normal. But I have lately become so good at it that it has become stressful because people think I am normal. That lack of accommodation has caused some problems.

So, as a little web experiment, here are seven things I would love to tell people but never really had the guts to. If this gets me into trouble, I will definitely not hesitate to take it down.

I am hoping it will have the opposite effect, and help to keep me out of the trouble I seem to get into.

So, with that in mind, here are seven things I would want to tell you.

### **01: Stop offering me food.**

This may be number one on my list, which is why I am putting it here.

Every time I go somewhere, someone offers me food. Now I know that it is customary in our society and is seen as a symbol and sign of politeness. But I can't eat a lot of what you can, and unless you want me barfing all over your new living room sofa (or carpet, or coffee table), it is best to let that one go.

If you want to be polite or if you want to show me you care, give me a big hug and be done with it. It is much healthier for me (see **03** below) and I will get the message loud and clear.

### **02: Leave me alone about the drugs and the teether on my keychain.**

The drugs are prescription pain killers. I take them because I am in fibro agony without them.

The teether is from the autistic side. Teethers calm the oral, gustatory, auditory, and proprioceptive senses all at the same time in some (not all) people with autism. Many with autism go around gnawing on anything they can get their hands on. I prefer to just munch on a teether. It works for me, so I don't need anything else. I tried to choose a teether to put on the keychain that worked (not all of them do) and wasn't immediately recognizable as a teether.

Some people have a problem with these two things.

Some really have a problem with the teething.

Get over it.

### **03: Gotta have that neuro-tactile feedback.**

Tactile defensiveness is one of the first red flags as an indicator of autism. Classic example would be the mother trying to feed her baby and he (or she) pushes away and refuses and cries instead, leaving the mother to think she has done something wrong and is a bad mother.

She is not a bad mother. The child is in pain from the touch of another person.

Then there is that small sub-set of people, myself included, that are wired the opposite way in that we are in pain unless we are touching someone else.

It is obvious that the tactile defensive got the better deal.

Touch is good. It doesn't have to be sexual, indeed I would very much prefer that it wasn't because I am so not into that. But there is also nothing that can settle me down and make me think clearer than the gentle touch of a friend.

It completes a missing neurological circuit and literally takes my pain away. Better than any medication could ever do.

It also clears my eyes and ears so I can see and hear better. See **05** below.

### **04: Intimacy good, crowds bad.**

I know that sometimes it is necessary to be in a crowd, and in those cases, it is okay. I just prefer to avoid it if I can.

I like being one on one with someone I care about. I like being alone with my friends. Sometimes I even like being in a crowd with my friends, like if we are out at a mall or at a movie or restaurant somewhere.

But the crowds are still hard to deal with. They hurt me. :(

## **05: I am blind, and yet I see. I am deaf, and yet I hear.**

My eyes don't work. I could stop here, because it really is that simple. They don't work.

It isn't that I am "blind" in the regular, standard sense, I do get information and images through my eyes. But the information and images are autistically distorted.

What I see is the same thing you see, except when I see it, there is distortion of clouds and shadow. That's how I see things, as clouds and shadow and random geometric shapes.

There are prisms in my lenses, and that helps a bit. I have learned over the years to compensate and focus, I guess I would have to call it "translation." I take what I see, and, somewhere in my brain, I "translate" it into a viable image. Sometimes, and thankfully it is becoming less and less, sometimes I still get it wrong.

Color is a problem for me, too. It isn't that I don't see color, it is more that sometimes the color I see is the wrong color. A color other than what is actually there. And yellow hurts. Bright yellow really hurts.

The more I see something, the easier it is to see it. I don't like driving on streets that I have not been on before because it is hard to see the road. But once I have traveled it a few times, it gets easier to see.

My ears are the same way. There is audio distortion coming in along with whatever else I am hearing, and I have to filter through the distortion I am hearing and translate it into something I can understand.

I have done this for so long that the translation for both of these is almost instant. But if I am stressed or fatigued or under the weather, it is much harder to do accurately.

Both my eyes and ears are very sensitive. My eyes are light sensitive and there have been times when I have stepped outside and instantly vomited on the porch from the bright sunlight. That's why I wear the wrap around polarized lenses outdoors.

My ears are sensitive to certain specific frequencies of sound. I hear them louder than I hear the others. So what is soft to you is sometimes very loud and painful to me.

## **06: The primitive language "double double words words" are not intentional.**

You don't have to tell me I am not three years old. I already know.

But it isn't intentional. It isn't something that I am doing on purpose to annoy you.

Lack of speech is right up there at the top of symptoms of autism. Many will never speak at all. Most (if not all) of the rest of us are going to struggle with it. Pronouns are a common problem, and I get those wrong, too, if I am not careful. But the main problem I have is with the double double words words.

Just know that it is kind of the way I am and the way I am wired and that it does not reflect on my intelligence and/or lack thereof. I am smart even if I can't do something as simple as to say an easy sentence appropriately.

Certain sounds are harder to say than others. So M's become N's and D's become G's, etc. Because it is a lot easier and more native to me.

Language is like the vision and the hearing. It has to be translated. Unlike the vision and the hearing, this translation goes both ways. I have my own autistic, primitive, double double word word language, and if I want to say something to you, I have to translate it in my head into your regular language before I can say it.

And when you say something to me, I have to translate it into my own primitive language before I can understand it. Sometimes this is not possible and you will have to rephrase what you are saying for me to get it.

But I will eventually get it.

If I am tired or stressed, or if the topic is complicated, the translation is going to be very difficult and you might here the native language slip out a bit more.

I suppose it can also be seen as a sign of trust. The translation takes a lot of work and energy that I'd rather not be putting into it. So if I get to know people and start to trust them, I let that go so I can be more comfortable.

The primitive language comes from a child alter that is part of the autism.

Every now and then I find someone who loves me enough to talk to me in my own language. That is a lot easier for me. It is rare to find such a person, and it is rarer still when they get the grammar and syntax right.

But I love it when they do. :)

## **07: Overload**

This is the hardest one to write about, so I saved it for last.

The senses of the person with autism are not designed to process rapid information. Too much of this and the senses get overloaded and shut down.

Then the person who owns the shut down senses shuts down right along with them.

So if we are someplace with rapid activity, noise and motion, and I appear to be someplace else, that's because I probably am. And it isn't a pretty place to be.

But as soon as I am in a dark and quiet place without all that sensory modulation, I will find my way back.

The clicky red/green/blue bracelet around my left wrist (the bracelet has been blessed and anointed for me) and the stretchy necklace/bracelets are there for medical reasons. They are an outlet for the nervous energy that naturally builds up in the rapid processing situations.

They have saved me from seizures more than once.

I am not a bad person, I am just different. Maybe different in many ways, but I am still just as human as you are. I have emotions and feelings. I have intelligence. I have a sense of humor.

I have run into people in my life who don't understand this. I have learned to let them go. I have learned to stay away from them. I have learned to spend my time around people who get it and who want to be around me.

Thomas loves his friends. :)

Oh yes, there is one more small thing...

## **08: The seizures are not dangerous.**

Hopefully you will never see them. But if you do, know that they aren't dangerous. Yes they are painful, very painful sometimes, but they are not dangerous.

You do not need to call 911. I will be okay. :)