

Driven by Rage

"Mister McGee, Don't Make Me Angry. You Wouldn't Like Me...When I'm Angry..."

by Thomas A. McKean – 01/26/09

What follows is an opinion. Indeed the majority of what you have read (and what you have yet to read) in any *Autism @ Home* is opinion; such is how little we truly do know about autism. Some of that opinion is based on fact. This opinion is based solely on gut feeling and personal experience.

Having said that, I believe there is a direct correlation between auditory sensory dysfunction and rage.

Autism is a complex disorder with many various symptoms and behaviors. No one with autism is the same. Some have the rage. Some don't. Some (like myself) have the rage early but eventually (and fortunately) outgrow it.

One of the problems with recovering from autism (not that one can ever be 100% recovered) is the guilt that is carried for the past. I know what happened and the things I did are not my fault. But sometimes I still think maybe I should have done things differently, even if I was only eight years old. I did my share of tearing up the house, that is for sure. Most of the time it was because of certain sounds I was hearing in the house at the time.

The auditory problems in autism are usually frequency based, rather than decibel based. This means it is the pitch or frequency of the sound rather than the volume of the sound itself that causes the problems. This has led to many a parent scratching heads wondering why their child is fine in a noisy room and covers ears in the quiet room next door. Look up at those fluorescent lights. Do you hear them humming? I didn't think so. I have seen a lot of violent behavior in my travels, and though obviously not all of it is auditory based, I have found that a lot of it is. Kids may also have problems in school but not at home because of this. They may be hearing the silent lights overhead or they may be afraid every second that the fire alarm will call attention to another drill.

If your child is angry much of the time and you can't see any obvious reason for it, consider the sounds in the environment. Is the TV too loud? Is there a fan or an air conditioner running? It could be anything, maybe something you will never hear. In that case, you will have to be creative in looking for what it could be.

Again, I am not saying that auditory sensitivity is always at the root cause of aggression, certainly it isn't. The child may be attempting to communicate, or, like has happened to all of us on occasion, he or she may just be mad.

But as you search for what may be the cause of the anger, don't forget to add this to the list.