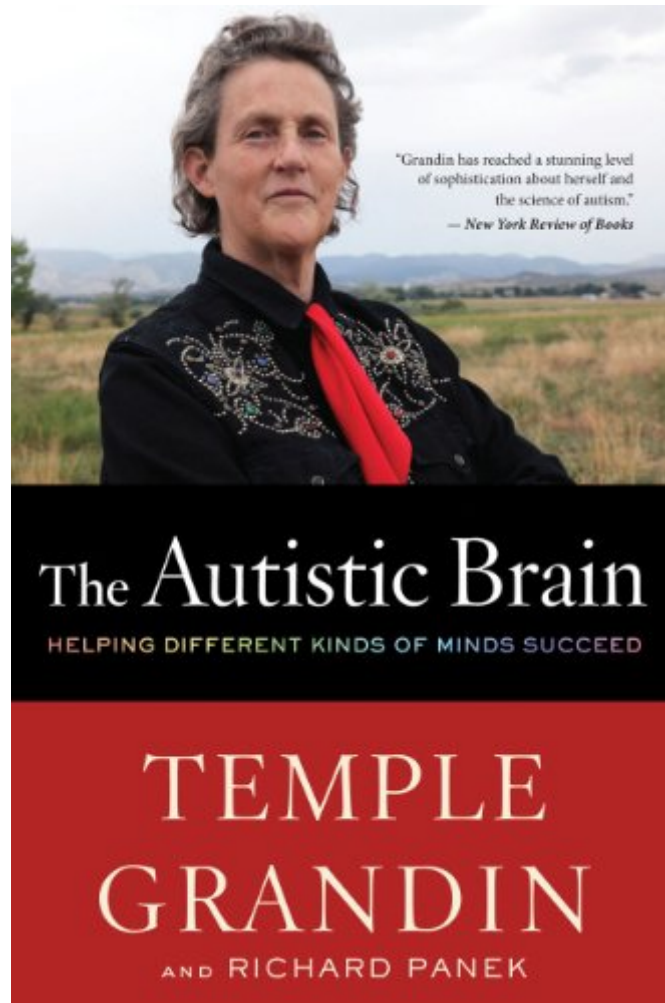


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The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across The Spectrum



Synopsis

A cutting-edge account of the latest science of autism, from the best-selling author and advocate When Temple Grandin was born in 1947, autism had only just been named. Today it is more prevalent than ever, with one in 88 children diagnosed on the spectrum. And our thinking about it has undergone a transformation in her lifetime: Autism studies have moved from the realm of psychology to neurology and genetics, and there is far more hope today than ever before thanks to groundbreaking new research into causes and treatments. Now Temple Grandin reports from the forefront of autism science, bringing her singular perspective to a thrilling journey into the heart of the autism revolution. Weaving her own experience with remarkable new discoveries, Grandin introduces the neuroimaging advances and genetic research that link brain science to behavior, even sharing her own brain scan to show us which anomalies might explain common symptoms. We meet the scientists and self-advocates who are exploring innovative theories of what causes autism and how we can diagnose and best treat it. Grandin also highlights long-ignored sensory problems and the transformative effects we can have by treating autism symptom by symptom, rather than with an umbrella diagnosis. Most exciting, she argues that raising and educating kids on the spectrum isn't just a matter of focusing on their weaknesses; in the science that reveals their long-overlooked strengths she shows us new ways to foster their unique contributions. From the spies in Silicon Valley to the five-year-old without language, Grandin understands the true meaning of the word spectrum. The Autistic Brain is essential reading from the most respected and beloved voices in the field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very well written text on autism and brain science. The collaboration between Grandin, probably the world's best known individual with high functioning autism, and Panek, a well regarded science writer, was a smart move for this book. While I have not read a previous work by Grandin, as a parent with a child diagnosed with moderate level autism I have frequently read about her and have seen enough interviews of her that I could hear her voice as I made my way through this text. Out of necessity, I have read a high number of books and research papers associated with autism, and the vast insight that Grandin shares from her own experience is valuable, as is what she shares about brain science and the opportunities she has had throughout the years to participate in ground breaking research that included scans of her own brain. These two topics are interwoven throughout the book, and I agree with other reviewers here that this book probably has a wider audience than what the authors may have originally surmised. However, because I have read so much with regard to autism, potential readers of this book should be aware that the criticisms from autistic readers that Grandin mentions in this book about her past assertions with regard to how "thinking in pictures" is a common trait across autistic individuals, might cease but be redirected toward the fact that Grandin heavily concentrates on high functioning autism, not the entire spectrum. The DSM-5 may no longer include different degrees of autism, but even Grandin explains her reservations about DSM diagnoses. Potential readers just need to keep in mind that the vast majority of her focus here is on those with high functioning autism like herself.

The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across The Spectrum is hands down *brilliant.* Every parent and teacher of an autistic child should get a copy of this book and read it with highlighter in hand. In fact, Grandin has written a book that will help teenage autistic children understand their differences and *abilities.* And therein lies its brilliance. The chapter called "Lighting Up the Autistic Brain" asks the question what does an autistic brain look like -- and is it different from a brain that has suffered

trauma/injury? Grandin takes us to Schneider's Pittsburgh lab, where HDFT technology is literally lighting up those differences. For those of us with brain injuries, HDFT can illuminate which fibers are damaged and how many. But, as Schneider tells us, the autistic brain is **not** damaged. He says: " we're looking at anomalous growth, be it genetic, be it developmental, etc., within that process." In other words, the autistic brain is not the product of trauma. It is not damaged. It's **different.** I'm still pondering the profundity of this concept and how the book leads us to examine the autistic differences of being. **The Autistic Brain** is part memoir and part scientific exploration of the multiple differences of the autistic brain. Don't be but off by the science part of it. Temple Grandin writes in a way that is uncomplicated and direct. She makes sense of a very complex subject. (Her explanation of the "kinds" of autism is one of the best I've ever read.) Because she lives the differences inherent in autism, we come to see those differences and respect them. Grandin calls these different ways of thought Picture Thinking, Word/Fact Thinking, and Pattern Thinking. In the margin of my copy, I wrote: The theory of multiple intelligences for people with autism. Right on!

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