

Book Review: The Reason I Jump: One boy's voice from the silence of autism

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ABSTRACT

In this present article, a book review is presented following the works of Naoki Higashida's acclaimed book, "The reason I jump". This is one of the most popular works read by readers wishing to know more about individuals/children with autism. This definitely urges us to look into the faculties of autistic mind, leaving behind the so-called conventional lenses and stereotypes which contain and distort the essence of being autistic. Further, the author through a series of question and answer round format, as seen in interview, helps us in exploring the unique world of autism.

Keyword:- Book review, psychology, autism, Poulami De, Naoki Higashida

1. SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

The book is intended for all those who want to understand individuals with autism but not from the conventional lens which façades us. Naoki Higashida, the author is a 13 year old Japanese teenager diagnosed with autism is here to tell us how the world of a person with autism is, through his personal, everyday revelations. During this age of advancement, we are all exposed to all sorts of academic research studies, papers, websites and autobiographies of some famous personalities—who have managed to shine despite being autistic. But still there is a big split in the understanding of this disorder—why the individuals with autism behave the way they behave? This book comes as a savior—lucidly illustrating the several, kaleidoscopic experiences, feelings and desires of autistic people.

2. EVALUATION OF THE BOOK'S CONTENT

This book is perhaps written and published during a tense period where, the primary caregivers and other well-wishers of autistic individuals are continuously worried with question of the capabilities of these individuals. Many of them are losing hopes that these autistic children/individuals will never be able to harmonize with the 'normal' and 'acceptable' ways of living. This is an evident expression in the daily exchanges of the people, where many of them are not able to understand what goes behind the mind of an autistic child, who is made fun of and misapprehended.

The Reason I Jump begins with a series of questions posed in an interview format, one after the other, to which Naoki responds. He reasons and explains them from his own perspective, keeping in mind all of his fellow individuals diagnosed with autism, to all the readers. Through these questions which talk about the hallmark symptoms of autism, the author makes us understand time and again the herculean struggle people with autism go through to mold themselves into the acceptable societal preferences just to fit in. Also, how much worried, embarrassed and guilty these individuals feel when they see their problems is making others around them feel miserable. The author gives us an opportunity to unlock the autistic mind, and explore how enriching, unique and intellectual it is, trying to fit in and mirror the others' thoughts, feelings and wishes. Being empathetic and having the courage to hang on is a tough job, for the caregivers, parents and all of the general public. But this tremendous enduring love, optimism and will-power are what impel us all achieve and transcend, and attain all that we strive for. Naoki reminds the same simple principle holds true for individuals with autism as well. "You can't judge a person by their looks. But once you know the other person's inner self, both of you can be that much closer" (Higashida, 2013), is the dominating theme prevailing in this book, and the author urges us to enjoy the roller coaster ride into the world of autism.

The book begins by Naoki narrating how difficult it was to talk verbally with speech involved. He felt as if the utterances flew away, the moment he wanted to speak. The world seemed lonely, colourless and drab. But

thanks to his mother and his teacher, he could learn the language through alphabet grid and a computer to type on. Life around him is illustrated, which is full of ups and downs.

Through metaphors, similes, imageries—the author explains how autism affects the human faculties, and consequently making them unique and atypical. In numerous instances, Naoki effectively made comparisons between how an autistic child behaves differently from others. Finally, the author's way of storytelling, through portrayal of his life instances, grips our hearts, make us accept, appreciate and cherish the uniqueness associated with autism.

Naoki Higashida started his narratives, addressing the broad misconceptions around the salient symptoms of autism, which people hold. And then he started talking about his experiences and desires through stories, which hit the commonly held beliefs and queries.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK'S CONTENT IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Naoki's unpretending style in narrating his problems, experiences and overall his way of storytelling draws us in. This manner of narration keeps us engaged all throughout the process.

Nevertheless, in a nutshell this book is a good read for anyone who wants a better insight into autism and how these individuals relate to the outside world, despite their great struggles. It gives a tremendous boost to all those parents, caregivers, teachers and all other personnel dedicated to the needs of special children—to love their job and never to give up on these individuals. The author wants them to cherish all of the slow progress the children with autism achieve and treat them as any able child wants to be treated. This book is a priceless resource which motivates us all to unleash our diminished and physical selves to plunge into the world of unlimited potentials.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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5. REFERENCE

Higashida, N. (2013). *The Reason I Jump*. London: Sceptre