

# Kaleidoscope

A MAGAZINE FROM AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP



SEEKING CLARITY  
WITH PSILOCYBIN

*In the shadows  
of society*



*Resilience and Empathy;  
A Letter for My Friend*

Modeling





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We extend our heartfelt gratitude to  
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### Facing From The Rising Ashes

This Is Not A Costume That  
Requires A Mask

I have Autism  
and ADHD

Living in a world  
where you'll feel  
the wraith of severe criticism  
that can cause PTSD

I know how a disorder can  
make it hard to  
conduct yourself

However I became a warrior  
of honor and it  
wasn't constructed by  
any one else

I don't care if it doesn't put me in  
front of the line  
as long as I'm not last

Because Autism and ADHD is not  
a costume that requires a mask

Written by  
Myles Walker Jr



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# FROM THE EDITOR



## Get Involved: Share Your Voice!

Have a burning question about autism? A personal story that could inspire others? Or perhaps some snapshots capturing special moments? Send them our way!

Your input adds depth and richness to our magazine, creating a space that truly reflects the collective spirit of our community. Don't hesitate—your voice matters, and we can't wait to feature your unique perspectives!

Sent to :  
[magkaleidoscope@gmail.com](mailto:magkaleidoscope@gmail.com)

Welcome to our September edition, where we continue to explore the emotional and practical challenges of raising children on the autism spectrum.

In "Struggle to Hold On Amidst the Turmoil of Raising a Son," a mother shares her raw experiences, revealing the strength it takes to balance love, exhaustion, and hope. Her journey reminds us of the resilience found in community support.

We also touch on emerging therapies in "Seeking Clarity with Psilocybin," exploring the potential benefits of psychedelic research for mental health, including its relevance to autism-related challenges.

"Resilience and Empathy: A Letter for My Friend" is a heartfelt tribute to the power of friendship during tough times, showcasing how empathy can be a crucial anchor for families in crisis.

In "Helping Understand 'No,'" we provide simple strategies to help children grasp boundaries and the importance of respectful communication.

Potty training concerns are tackled in "Potty Timer Trick," where we offer a practical method to help ease children through this developmental stage with more confidence and less anxiety.

"The Adventure of the Wandering Child" shares safety tips for parents whose children have a tendency to wander, balancing freedom and security.

In "In the Shadows of Society," we highlight the isolation often felt by autistic individuals and their families, stressing the need for increased understanding and inclusion.

We also feature "Respect Personal Space," offering guidance on how to teach children about boundaries and consent to foster healthy social relationships.

For parents struggling with child care options, "The Daycare Dilemma" provides tips on advocating for your child's needs in daycare settings, ensuring they receive the right support.

Our ongoing Q&A section, "Why What How," continues to address reader questions, offering expert advice on everyday challenges.

Finally, "When Your Child Talks to 'Ear'" explores imaginative play, encouraging parents to embrace these unique forms of self-expression in their children.

We hope these articles provide practical tips, emotional support, and a sense of community as we move through the month together.

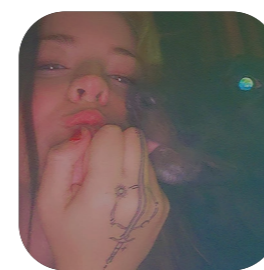
GEORGE



## Contributors

A big thank you to everyone who adds to our magazine! Your stories and thoughts make our community special. We love hearing from you because each story is like a friendly guide for others. Your ideas and experiences help us all connect and understand each other better. So, thank you for being a crucial part of our Autism Support family!

### Autism Support Group Top Contributors



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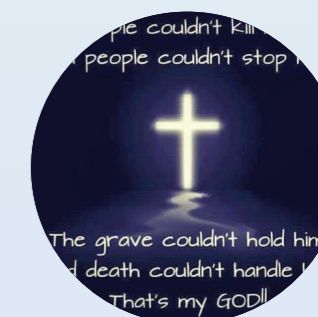


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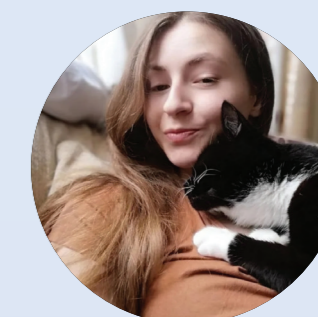
## Special Thanks



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# EDITORS

Pick



## Bridging the gap in autism spectrum disorder care: Empowering physicians with up-to-date research

The growing incidence rate of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been well documented, particularly among children. With this increase, primary care physicians (PCPs), many of whom may not yet have treated a patient with ASD, must now prepare for an influx of adults with ASD transitioning from pediatric care into primary care practices. As these individuals age, the role of PCPs becomes increasingly important.

However, many PCPs are challenged to meet the nuanced needs of adults with ASD due to gaps in resources, knowledge and access to up-to-date research. It's essential to recognize that while groundbreaking research on autism continues, there is an immediate opportunity to improve the care provided today.

People diagnosed with ASD often present with medical conditions that may not always appear straightforward but can be treated effectively. There is no need to wait for future innovations to begin enhancing the quality of care, as physicians can improve treatment today by incorporating already available resources into their approach.

PCPs often serve as the first point of contact for individuals with ASD, yet many physicians report feeling inadequately prepared to

address the complexities of the disorder. Only 13% of surveyed providers feel they have the tools and resources necessary for effective ASD care, leaving the majority without the means or resources to deliver high-quality care.

This lack of preparedness is particularly concerning given the high prevalence of co-occurring conditions among adults with autism, such as epilepsy, gastrointestinal disorders and anxiety, which often go untreated or are mismanaged due to insufficient knowledge. The urgent need for better resources and more comprehensive training for physicians is underscored by the stark difference in life expectancy among individuals with ASD, averaging 54 years compared with 72 years for the general population.

“  
Medical conditions that  
may not always appear  
straightforward  
”



## SCU survey on the effects of diet on autistic adults

Research in the field of nutritional psychiatry is underway at Southern Cross University and postdoctoral research fellow, Dr Jessica Bayes, is looking for participants for a survey to help with the findings.

Dr Bayes is recruiting for the national 15 minute online survey – exploring diet quality, food intake, mental health and wellbeing outcomes in Autistic adults.

The survey, which needs a minimum of 385 participants and has full ethical approval from SCU's Human Research Ethics Committee, will be open for up to a year.

Baseline health, nutrition, mental wellbeing and lifestyle

Dr Bayes says investigating baseline health, nutrition, mental wellbeing and lifestyle habits is crucial to identify and establish future required research in this field in order to support Autistic adults in a holistic, well-rounded way and complete way.

'Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the emerging field of adult autism research in Australia, with the view to inform clinical practice, policy development, and support services tailored to this demographic,' she said

Dr Bayes says there are currently no studies exploring diet in relation to impacts on mental health and wellbeing. 'Significant previous research in non-autistic adults has shown that diet and mental health are highly correlated, and that diet and lifestyle modifications (lifestyle psychiatry) can improve mental health outcomes, however, it is not known whether these findings would translate to

Autistic adults,' she said.

Helping autistic adults to thrive 'We hope to investigate and highlight the voices, experiences, preferences and challenges regarding diet, lifestyle factors and mental wellbeing of autistic adults across Australia. This is important for understanding what additional supports, services and accommodations are needed to help autistic adults to thrive.'

Dr Bayes hopes that this research will lead to similar studies with other area. 'We are hoping that this project will steamroll the research in this field so we can make specific recommendations personalised to different conditions and illnesses.'

## Adventure Club by Center for Social Dynamics: Building Friendships Through ABA Therapy

CONCORD, Calif., Oct. 1, 2024 / PRNewswire/ -- Center for Social Dynamics (CSD) is proud to share the transformative success of its Adventure Club, a program combining Applied Behavior Analysis ("ABA") therapy with themed social activities designed to maximize learning for clients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Over the past year, Adventure Club blossomed into a community where clients and specialists work together and grow socially. Learn more about CSD's Adventure Club here.

### Key Highlights

Stories of Friendship: Exciting outcomes of Adventure Club include the ongoing success stories from CSD clients, caregivers, and Adventure Club Guides. "Just a few weeks ago, two clients hit it off during their sessions. They asked their moms if they could stay in touch and traded numbers!" said Alexander Beatty, Adventure Club Guide.

Social Skills Development: Clients work on their goals and practice with their peers through themed activities like "Buccaneer's Bounty Bingo" and "Dino Dig Sensory Experience," fostering collaboration and connection.

Improved attendance: Clients can make-up missed sessions at a weekend Adventure Club, which has improved make-up rates by 45%, which benefits client outcomes. The program's impact is more profound than anticipated, with clients forming meaningful friendships that continue outside the program. "For the child who made a new friend for the first time, or the young adult



who emerged as a mentor to their peers, Adventure Club can be a life-changing experience, and we are humbled to play even a small part in their journeys," said a Mary Whitlock, Vice President of California Region.

By participating in a supportive community like Adventure Club, clients build social skills and tap into the power of collaboration. This sense of community provides a foundation for growth that extends well beyond the program, empowering each individual to thrive.

### About Center for Social Dynamics (CSD)

CSD provides autism therapy services across California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and Hawaii. Through ABA therapy and programs like Adventure Club, CSD empowers individuals with autism to achieve their fullest potential. For more information, visit CSD's website.

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## ABA in school: Some families are still being told no despite a state law billed as 'a path to yes'

Every day, Ileana Sadin picks up her 5-year-old son Julian from kindergarten in Denver and drives him to a therapy clinic. Julian has autism, and his pediatrician has prescribed 35 hours of applied behavior analysis, or ABA therapy, per week to help Julian communicate.

But Julian doesn't get nearly that many hours of therapy. At most, he gets 10 a week after school.

Denver Public Schools has refused his parents' request for a private ABA provider to work with Julian in his kindergarten classroom, even though the family's private insurance would pay for it.

Without ABA therapy in school, Julian's parents worry he is losing skills. Before he enrolled in public school, an ABA therapist helped Julian participate in lessons at his day care, his parents said. Julian learned the alphabet and could count to 20 in English and Spanish.

When Julian transitioned to public school, his parents were told, "He's making progress. He can count to 10 now," Julian's father, Joshua Kurdys, recalled. "He could count to 20 a year and a half ago. That says something to me."

A 2022 state law was intended to make it easier for students to get ABA therapy in schools. But ultimately it was watered down to require only that districts have a policy that addresses how a student with a prescription for "medically necessary services" receives those services in school.

Parents and advocates say that has led to an uneven experience for families across school districts and less support for students, some of whom end up quietly lost in the shuffle while others end up in a loop of frustration, explosive behavior, and suspension from school.

### Useful Link

<https://www.medbridge.com/educate/courses/#/>



# Struggle to Hold On the Turmoil of Raising a Son



And there it is again, that ugly word that coils itself around my throat – burden. My boy, my son, the one who was supposed to be my light, and now he's this weight I carry, this anchor that keeps me chained to the ground, and I hate myself for thinking it, for feeling it, but it's there, and no amount of prayer or whiskey can wash it away.

I lie awake at night, and it's like the darkness is alive, whispering all those fears I can't say out loud, telling me that I'm failing him, that I'm not enough, that no matter how hard I try, I'll never be the mother he needs. I can see it, clear as day – him, standing there years from now, looking at me with those same wild eyes, and I'll still be reaching out, still trying to hold on, but he'll be gone, lost to some place I can't follow.

We went on that trip, in the end. God help me, we went, and I felt the weight lift, just for a moment, like the sun breaking through the clouds. And I thought maybe, just maybe, I could find my way back to the woman I used to be, the one who wasn't always so afraid, so tired. But even there, even on that beach with the waves licking at my feet and my husband's hand warm in mine, I could feel it, that pull, that tether tying me back to him, to my boy, my beautiful boy who's trapped in a world I can't reach.

And when we came back, I saw him standing there, and I swear to God, I thought I saw a flicker, just a flicker of something in his eyes, something that told me he understood, that he knew I hadn't left him, that I'd always come back, always. And maybe that's enough. Maybe that's all I can be – a mother who keeps coming back, even when it hurts, even when it feels like I'm breaking apart. Because that's what love is, isn't it? Not some bright, shining thing but a thread that binds us, even when it's frayed and worn and ready to snap.

And maybe one day, he'll see that thread, and he'll hold on to it, and we'll find our way out of this darkness together. But until then, I'll be here, always here, because he's my son, my boy, and I'll never let him go, no matter how deep the shadows grow.

Courtesy to  
**Michle**

“

*He'll hold on to it, and  
we'll find our way out of  
this darkness together*

”

It's hard to say when it started, that slow unraveling, the feeling like I'm sinking into the ground beneath my feet, like roots wrapping around my legs, pulling me down into the earth, into this heavy, unending weight that presses in from all sides, and there he is, my son, my boy, thrashing and screaming like a wild thing caught in a snare, and I can't do anything but hold on, just hold on and pray that this time, this time he'll stop before the scratches go too deep, before the rage swallows him whole.

It wasn't always like this. There was a time, wasn't there? When he was just a boy, just a boy like any other, all soft curls and wide eyes, looking up at me like I

was the whole world. But now, God, now it's like he's a storm I can't control, like he's this force that's too big, too strong, and I'm just this broken little dam, holding back a flood that won't be stopped. And the days, they run together, one long blur of tantrums and tears and the blood on my arm from where he dug his nails in because he doesn't know how to say what's wrong, doesn't know how to let it out, and I'm left here, caught in the middle, torn between loving him so fiercely it hurts and this gnawing, ugly feeling that I can't shake, this thought that maybe, just maybe, I'm not strong enough for this.

And there's my husband, standing in the doorway, and he's got that look again, that look that says he's just as lost as I am, and we're both drowning, both clinging to this idea that maybe if we just get away, just for a little while, maybe we can remember what it feels like to breathe. We planned that trip, didn't we? God, how we talked about it, how we said it would be our chance to feel like ourselves again, to peel off this skin of worry and exhaustion and just be. But now, the thought of leaving him behind, leaving him with my parents who love him but can't understand him, who are afraid of him now that he's grown so big and so strong, it feels like I'm cutting out a piece of myself and leaving it there, on that porch, with his face pressed against the window, watching us drive away.



**Be Change**  
Centre for Autism

*Happy Teachers Day*



# SEEKING CLARITY WITH PSILOCYBIN

“

Many have walked  
this path

”

In the dim light of my small apartment, cluttered with the remnants of a life spent chasing fleeting joys, I sat contemplating the delicate balance between hope and despair. The walls seemed to close in, each breath a reminder of the weight I carried—an invisible burden, forged from the intertwined strands of autism, social anxiety disorder, OCD, and selective mutism.

Escitalopram had become my constant companion, a lifeline amid the tumultuous waves of my mind. Yet, even with the numbing comfort it provided, I found myself yearning for something more—a spark, perhaps, to ignite the shadows that danced at the edges of my consciousness.

It was in the quiet hum of the internet’s vast expanse that I stumbled upon whispers of psilocybin mushrooms—fabled remedies in the underground corridors of the human experience. People spoke of these mushrooms with a reverence usually reserved for sacred things, recounting stories of transcendent journeys, of their minds unshackled from the heavy chains of their anxieties, of glimpses into the shimmering essence of life itself. They described vivid landscapes painted with colors I had never dared to imagine, emotional epiphanies that opened their hearts to the connections they had long sought.

As I delved deeper into these narratives, I could feel the intoxicating allure of their experiences wash over me like the

gentle tide of the ocean, promising liberation from the confines of my anxious thoughts. But alongside the euphoria, an insistent voice of caution echoed in the recesses of my mind, its tone both familiar and unnerving. What if, in my pursuit of illumination, I stumbled into darkness? The ghosts of my past whispered warnings;

I had navigated the jagged edges of medication before, and I was all too aware of the tumult that could arise from even the most innocent of explorations. Microdosing was a concept that flitted through my thoughts like a wayward breeze—taking just enough to feel alive without the overwhelming tide of a full-blown experience. Yet, how could I risk the delicate balance I had painstakingly established with my medication?

With each passing day, the tension between desire and apprehension grew. I longed to shed the weight

of my isolation, to plunge into the depths of my psyche and emerge transformed, as so many had claimed to do. The promise of psilocybin—the chance to encounter a version of myself unfettered by the crippling constraints of my conditions—was a siren song I found hard to resist. Yet, amid the chaos of my thoughts, I felt an instinctive pull toward caution. I wasn’t merely a mind adrift; I was a tapestry woven with intricate threads of emotion, and any new addition risked unraveling the delicate fabric of my being.

As the days melted into each other, I found solace in the routine of my life. The mundane rituals became a kind of refuge, a way to shield myself from the tempest within. My morning coffee, the feel of the familiar mug against my palms, the quiet rustle of leaves outside my window—it all offered a brief respite, a moment of normalcy in a world that often felt alien. But the whispers of psilocybin lingered, taunting me with the possibilities of connection and understanding.

In the solitude of my room, I often found myself lost in reflection, the flickering candlelight casting dancing shadows that mirrored the turmoil in my heart. I wanted to feel more, to connect more deeply with the people around me, to peel back the layers of anxiety and fear that shrouded me like a fog. The yearning for connection, the desire to transcend my internal barriers, loomed large. And so, I sought counsel from my therapist, a trusted guide through the labyrinth of

my psyche.

In our sessions, I unfolded my apprehensions and desires, painting a picture of my ambivalence toward psilocybin. To my relief, my therapist listened intently, her understanding a balm for my fraying nerves. She spoke of the emerging research, the delicate dance between the allure of psilocybin and the realities of its effects, especially for someone with my particular sensitivities. It was a conversation filled with both hope and caution, as we explored the intricate tapestry of my emotions, unraveling the threads of desire and fear until they lay bare before us.

She offered insights that felt both enlightening and grounding. “You’re not alone in this journey,” she said softly, her voice steadying the tempest within me. “Many have walked this path, seeking something to help them bridge the gap between their inner world and the outside one. But it’s important to approach it with care, to understand that the allure of quick answers often hides the complexities of your own narrative.”

Her words lingered in the air long

after I left her office. I realized that I had been searching for a shortcut, a magical solution that could whisk me away from my struggles. But perhaps the journey toward understanding was not one to be rushed. Maybe it was in the slow, deliberate exploration of my own psyche that I would uncover the answers I sought.

In the weeks that followed, I immersed myself in the therapeutic process. I began journaling, pouring my thoughts onto the page, laying bare the intricate webs of my fears and dreams. The act of writing became a sacred ritual, a way to confront the chaos within and transform it into something tangible. I explored mindfulness practices, learning to sit with my discomfort instead of running from it. With each passing day, I felt a subtle shift within myself—a growing sense of agency, a glimmer of hope.

And still, the echoes of psilocybin lingered in my mind—a tantalizing whisper of what could be. Yet, as I explored these new avenues, I found solace in the understanding that growth does not require a grand leap into the unknown. It can be found

in the quiet moments, the small victories, the gradual unearthing of one’s true self.

In the end, I understood that my narrative was still being written, one moment at a time. While the shadows might loom large, the light, too, was there, waiting to be discovered. It was in the act of living, in the embrace of uncertainty, that I might find the connections I so desperately sought—the threads that would ultimately bind me to the world in a way I had yet to fully comprehend.

As I gazed out of my window, watching the sun dip below the horizon, I felt a flicker of determination rise within me. The world outside was vast and full of possibilities, and perhaps, just perhaps, I was finally beginning to understand my place within it.





# Resilience and Empathy: A Letter for My Friend

My Dear Friend

I hope this letter finds you well despite the challenging circumstances you've shared regarding your experiences as an individual on the autism spectrum. It saddens me to hear about the bullying and discrimination you've faced throughout your life especially now when society is gradually beginning to embrace neurodiversity. I felt it necessary to share my thoughts and reflections on your situation as I believe we can navigate this journey together.

As you know my experiences have

taught me the value of embracing our differences. Literature and science have often provided solace from life's harsher realities. The pursuit of knowledge serves as a protective shield against the ignorance that can fuel bullying. It's essential to recognize that those who engage in such behavior are often driven by their own fears or a lack of understanding. Their actions reflect their inability to accept the richness of human experience rather than any deficiency on your part.

While it is unfortunate that bullying can persist into adulthood it is equally true that you possess the strength and intelligence to rise above it. You have navigated a world that often misunderstands you and in doing so you've developed a remarkable resilience. I want to emphasize that your identity as a person on the autism spectrum is not a flaw; it is a unique aspect of who you are. Your ability to see the world through a different lens is a gift one that can contribute to a more enriched society.

In our increasingly interconnected world there are more opportunities than ever to find supportive communities. I encourage you to seek out forums both online and offline where individuals share similar experiences. Connecting with others who understand the nuances of living with autism can provide comfort and practical strategies for coping with bullying and fostering self-acceptance. The more you learn about autism and neurodiversity the more you can educate others and challenge the misconceptions that fuel bullying.



Moreover consider expressing your thoughts and feelings through writing. As a writer I have often found that putting pen to paper—or fingers to keyboard—can be a cathartic release. By articulating your experiences you not only clarify your own feelings but may also reach others facing similar challenges. Your voice can resonate with those who need encouragement reinforcing the idea that we are not alone in our struggles.

Therapy can also be a valuable resource providing a safe space to explore your feelings and develop coping mechanisms. A trained therapist familiar with autism can help you navigate the emotional landscape shaped by your experiences. They can

equip you with tools to assert yourself manage anxiety and respond to bullying constructively. Remember seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it is a proactive step toward reclaiming your narrative.

As you encounter these challenges cultivating self-compassion is crucial. Understand that feeling hurt or frustrated is a natural response to bullying and allow yourself the grace to experience these emotions without judgment. Engage in activities that bring you joy—be it reading writing or any passion—that can serve as a refuge from negativity. Embrace the parts of life that inspire you allowing them to uplift your spirit and counterbalance the pain inflicted by others.

Furthermore challenge any negative beliefs you may hold about yourself. Often those who bully seek to diminish your confidence and self-worth. Remember you possess intrinsic value irrespective of what others may say. Surround yourself with those who appreciate you for who you are celebrating your uniqueness rather than using it as a weapon.

In conclusion dear friend I want to reiterate my belief in your strength and resilience. The world is vast and complex filled with individuals who may not understand the beauty of neurodiversity.

However you have the capacity to navigate this complexity with grace. Stand firm in your identity seek out supportive communities and know that your experiences can foster understanding and acceptance in others. You are not defined by the cruelty of some; rather you are defined by your capacity for kindness and your determination to live authentically.







## Helping Understand “No”

When working with my son, who has ADHD and autism, one of the hardest things we’ve faced is helping him understand the word “no.” Whether it’s about something he can’t do or something he can’t have at that moment, “no” often leads to frustration or confusion for him. I’ve come to realize that for him, “no” can feel too abstract or final, and that’s where his difficulties come from. Through a lot of trial and error, I’ve learned that approaching this in a structured, positive way is essential, and it all ties back to principles from applied behavior analysis (ABA).

What I’ve found helpful is shifting the focus from just saying “no” to guiding him toward what he *can* do. Instead of “no, you can’t have that toy right now,” I say something like, “First we need to finish this task, and then you can have the toy.” This gives him a clear expectation of what’s coming next, and it reduces the sense of loss or frustration that comes with just hearing “no.” By using “first... then...” statements, I’m helping him understand that “no” doesn’t mean never, and it gives him something positive to look forward to after completing the current activity.

This approach also helps him learn patience, but it’s a gradual process. He might not always accept the delay right away, but over time, he’s started to understand that there’s a predictable pattern. Using these “first... then...”

statements consistently in everyday situations has helped a lot. I also try to keep things very simple, with short and direct language, because too many words can overwhelm him.

Another strategy I use is incorporating visual aids. Because he processes visual information better than verbal instructions at times, I’ve started using visual schedules. These are basically picture cards that show the sequence of activities, like a picture of his homework followed by a picture of playtime. Seeing the “first” and “then” visually helps make the concept clearer for him. This way, when I tell him “no” to playing right now, he can see that playing will happen after the current task is done. It turns “no” from an abstract frustration into something more manageable for him.

In situations where I absolutely need to say “no,” especially when it involves his safety—like when he wants to run into the street or grab something dangerous—it’s important for me to stay calm but firm. In these moments, I avoid lengthy explanations because he may not be able to process all of that information in the heat of the moment. Instead, I give clear, short instructions and stay close to guide him through the situation.

What’s made a big difference is reinforcing his positive behavior. Every time he accepts “no” or follows a direction calmly, even if just for a few seconds, I try to immediately praise him or give him

a small reward, like a sticker or a high-five. Positive reinforcement helps him associate good things with accepting limits, and over time, this makes him more likely to handle “no” better in the future. Sometimes it’s just about celebrating the small wins—if he stays calm for a few seconds longer than before, that’s progress.

Another key factor in helping him understand “no” is consistency. This has been crucial for us. I’ve worked closely with his teachers, therapists, and anyone else who interacts with him regularly to make sure we’re all using the same approach. Whether he’s at home, at school, or with a caregiver, the rules and expectations around “no” need to stay the same. If he gets mixed messages from different people, it only adds to his confusion and frustration.

What I’ve learned is that this process takes time. There’s no overnight solution, but with patience, persistence, and a focus on positive reinforcement, we’ve started to see progress. He’s slowly becoming more able to understand and accept “no” as part of his day-to-day life, and that’s been a huge relief. While the challenges are still there, knowing we’re on the right track and seeing those small steps forward has made all the difference for both of us.

Courtesy to  
**Stephiny**



## Potty Timer Trick

Potty training is one of those milestones that can feel really overwhelming, especially for parents of children with autism. It’s a big step, and you may already be thinking about how to tackle it. I’ve worked with many families who’ve gone through this, and one of the most effective strategies I’ve seen is something I call the Potty Timer Trick. It’s a simple, structured approach that can really help make potty training less stressful for both you and your child. Let me walk you through how it works and why it’s been so successful for many children.

First of all, let’s talk about why this technique can be so helpful. Children with autism often respond really well to routines and predictable structures. They feel more secure when they know what to expect and when things happen consistently. This helps reduce anxiety, which can be a big factor when trying to teach new skills like potty training. When kids don’t fully recognize the internal signals their bodies are giving them — like when they need to go to the bathroom — the timer provides that external cue that helps bridge that gap. It’s like giving them a gentle reminder until they start to notice those feelings on their own.

Here’s how the Potty Timer Trick works in practice. You start by setting a timer for short intervals, usually around 20 to 30 minutes. This means that every time the timer goes off, it’s time to go to the bathroom, whether your child has expressed the need to go or not. The idea behind this is to create a lot of opportunities for success. By taking them to the bathroom frequently, you’re increasing the chances that they’ll actually need to go when they get there, and over time, this builds an association between feeling the need to go and using the toilet.

Now, I know that the idea of taking your child to the bathroom every 20 or 30 minutes can sound like a lot, and in the beginning, it might feel like you’re constantly watching the clock. But it’s important to remember that this is only temporary. The frequent trips to the bathroom help set the foundation, and as your child gets better at recognizing their body’s cues, you’ll be able to gradually lengthen the time between trips. But in the early stages, it’s all about giving them those regular reminders.

To make it even more engaging for your child, you can get creative with how you use the timer. Some kids love the sound of a kitchen timer or a phone alarm, while others might respond better to a visual timer, like an hourglass, where they can see the sand running out. If your child is more visually oriented, the hourglass might be a fun way to make the experience more concrete. You could even let them be the one to turn over the hourglass or press the button on the alarm, which gives them a little bit of ownership over the process. Making it fun and interactive can go a long way in reducing resistance and anxiety.

When the timer goes off, approach your child in a calm and friendly way, saying something simple like, “It’s potty time!” Keeping the tone positive and lighthearted is key here. You don’t want your child to feel pressured or stressed out by the process. The idea is to make it a routine, not a task. Some children might resist at first, and that’s completely normal. What’s important is that they understand that it’s part of the routine, just like brushing their teeth or getting dressed in the morning. And if they sit on the potty but don’t actually go, that’s totally fine! You want to give them lots of praise just for trying. Say something encouraging like, “Great job sitting on the potty!” and let them know they did

well, even if they didn’t pee or poop. The goal is to reinforce the behavior of going to the bathroom, not just the outcome.

As your child starts to get the hang of it, you can begin to adjust the intervals. If they’re consistently using the potty every time the timer goes off, you can start to push the intervals a little longer — maybe every 45 minutes instead of 30. Over time, you’ll notice that they’re starting to recognize when they need to go on their own, without needing the timer as much. But at the beginning, that frequent, predictable reminder is what helps them make the connection.

The beauty of the Potty Timer Trick is that it takes the pressure off both you and your child. Instead of constantly asking them if they need to go, which can sometimes lead to frustration or resistance, the timer does the reminding for you. It helps your child learn without feeling like they’re being nagged or rushed, and it helps you stay consistent without constantly watching the clock. Over time, as they get more comfortable, you’ll be able to step back and let them take the lead.

It’s important to remember that accidents are going to happen, and that’s okay. Potty training is a learning process, and every child learns at their own pace. Stay patient, stay positive, and celebrate the small victories along the way. Even just sitting on the potty is progress. If you keep the process light and encouraging, your child will feel supported and confident, and eventually, they’ll get the hang of it.

Courtesy to  
**Be Change**



# The Adventure of the Wandering Child

In this grand journey called parenthood, there's perhaps no task more daunting than raising a child who navigates the unique landscape of autism. As any mother or father will tell you, the heart of a parent is a tender thing, easily rattled when it comes to the safety of their little ones. And when we speak of wandering, that unpredictable urge to escape, we enter a realm filled with anxiety and concern.

Now, let me tell you something about wandering. It's not an uncommon predicament among children with autism; in fact, nearly half of these children will venture off without a thought. They might bolt from the familiar safety of home or school, driven by a longing for adventure, a quest for quiet, or perhaps just the simple pleasure of exploring the great unknown. Imagine, if you will, a child overwhelmed by the noise and chaos of the world, longing for a slice of peace. In such moments, it's no wonder they might slip away, seeking comfort in solitude or a fanciful distraction just beyond their reach.

Ah, but understanding this urge is merely the first step. It's not enough to shake one's head in despair; we must seek to understand what drives this behavior. Is it the blaring sound of a school bell that sends shivers down their spine? Is it the sight of a butterfly flitting by, urging them to chase after it? If we can uncover the "why" behind these escapades, we may just find a way to mitigate the "what if." Perhaps we can teach our little ones to express their discomfort rather than darting off in search of solace.

Now, in this modern age, we have some remarkable tools at our disposal. I'm talking about those nifty GPS tracking devices that can be affixed to a child's backpack or jacket like a badge of honor. Devices such as Jiobit or AngelSense offer real-time tracking and, in some cases, allow for a two-way conversation. Just picture it: you're in a crowded park, your child's little figure dashes away, and you can simply call out to them through a device. It's a bit of magic, really—a connection in a world that sometimes feels too vast and disconnected.

But let us not put all our eggs in the technological basket, for while gadgets are useful, they cannot replace the tender vigilance of a loving parent. There are practical steps we can take, and they often start right at home. Doors should be fitted with alarms that sound like a chorus of angels at the slightest hint of an escape. It may seem extreme to some, but when it comes to protecting our children, a little alarm goes a long way.

Equally important is the education of our children. It is our duty to instill in them the knowledge of safety, teaching them to recognize the perils of their surroundings. From crossing the street to identifying safe adults, these lessons are vital. Engaging in role-playing or using social stories—those simple narratives that outline different scenarios—can help cement this understanding in their minds. A well-crafted story about a child navigating their way home can be a soothing balm for anxious hearts.

And let's not forget the school environment. It should be a place of learning and joy, not a breeding ground for worry. Parents must take an active role in establishing safety protocols with teachers and administrators. Communication is key, and we should make sure that every staff member is aware of the risks associated with wandering. Extra supervision during transitions, secure doors, and perhaps even alarms that ring out when a child makes an uninvited exit—these are not just good ideas; they are necessities.

But what of the school experience itself? We must ask ourselves whether it is engaging enough for our children. Is it designed with their sensory needs in mind? For many children, school can be a daunting place filled with overwhelming sights and sounds. By working together with teachers and therapists, we can create an environment that feels safe and accommodating. Providing quiet spaces where a child can retreat when feeling overstimulated or offering opportunities for movement can make a world of difference.

As we navigate this intricate dance of safety and independence, we must remember that it is a delicate balance. The goal isn't to eliminate all risks—no, that would be as futile as trying to catch the wind. Rather, we must create a support system that allows our children to flourish while ensuring their safety. This requires creativity and a bit of daring on our part.

It's also wise to seek out the support of others who understand the trials we face. There is comfort to be found among fellow parents who share this journey. Whether it's through local support groups or friendly chats at school events, exchanging stories and strategies can provide both solace and insight. No one knows the unique challenges

of raising a child with autism better than those who walk the same path.

At the end of the day, there's no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges of wandering. Each child is a unique tapestry woven from experiences, needs, and personalities. But by staying proactive, communicating openly with caregivers, and teaching our children essential safety skills, we can make significant strides toward creating a safer world.

As we forge ahead on this journey, let us remember that progress takes time. We won't always have the answers, and that's perfectly alright. What matters most is the love and dedication we pour into creating a safe and nurturing environment for our children. The

road may be fraught with uncertainty, but it is also filled with the promise of growth and understanding.

In this great endeavor of parenting, we are not alone. There are countless others who share our hopes, fears, and dreams for our children. Together, as a community, we can share knowledge, support one another, and advocate for the well-being of all children. Let us move forward with courage and compassion, guiding our children through life's complexities while protecting their spirits. For in this delicate balance lies the true essence of parenting—a commitment to safety, understanding, and unwavering love.





# In the shadows of society

“ I would sit at lunch, surrounded by laughter and animated conversations, feeling only a void.”

In a dimly lit room filled with shadows that twisted into grotesque shapes, I sat, consumed by a profound sense of disquietude. My name is Gregor, but it is not my name that matters; it is the void surrounding me, an emptiness that festers within the corners of my mind. Like a prisoner trapped in a labyrinth of my own making, I often ponder the nature of my existence in a world that seems indifferent to my struggles. This is a reality I navigate daily, much like an insect scuttling across the damp walls of an oppressive cellar.

I have always felt a disconnection from those around me. Others—those seemingly normal beings who flit about with laughter and casual grace—appear to have emerged from some primordial source of knowledge that I, in my inadequacy, was denied. They communicate in a language that is foreign to me, imbued with nuance and intricacy, while I stumble through my attempts at interaction like a child attempting to grasp the complexities of a grand symphony. Each word that escapes my lips feels like a clumsy, half-formed thought, unworthy of the company it seeks to engage.

As a child, I found solace in the confines of my own mind, exploring thoughts far beyond the reach of social expectations. However, as I grew older, the pressure to conform weighed heavily upon me, suffocating the delicate threads of individuality that once danced freely. It was as if I were thrust into a ceaseless play, cast as a character without lines, expected to improvise in a script written by others. The roles I played were masks, crafted to conceal the isolation that gnawed at my essence.

During my school years, I tried to adapt to the chaotic whirl of adolescent interactions, desperately attempting to forge connections with peers. Each effort was met with the insufferable sting of rejection. I would sit at lunch, surrounded by laughter and animated conversations, feeling only a void. I felt like a specter, floating just out of reach, observing the vibrant tapestry of human connection from my lonely perch.

I remember a day when I finally gathered the courage to engage with classmates. It was an excruciating exercise in vulnerability. As I approached them, my heart pounded, drowning out the world. “What do you think about the new teacher?” I stammered, hoping to join their chatter. The moment my question left my lips, a silence enveloped the group. They turned to me, their expressions a mixture of curiosity and disdain, as if I had interrupted a sacred ritual. The moment stretched into eternity, and the heat of embarrassment crept up my neck, threatening to consume me.



As I retreated, the laughter that resumed felt like knives cutting through my being. I had ventured into the world only to discover that I was not welcome. The incident left a mark on my psyche, a reminder that the spaces I longed to inhabit were not meant for me. I retreated further into the solitude of my thoughts, where the world was kinder than the harsh reality I faced. Yet, the yearning for connection remained, a haunting melody playing in the background of my consciousness.

In college, I hoped for connection, but instead, I found a vast expanse of alienation. The social dynamics were intricate webs, and I was but a fly caught in sticky strands. Every interaction felt like an examination, and I was paralyzed by the fear of failure. My attempts to engage ended in stammering awkwardness, as if I were performing a tragic play for an audience uninterested in my script. I watched from the sidelines as others formed bonds, shared laughter, and built a community, all while feeling like a ghost haunting a once-vibrant home.

Work life brought its own challenges. In an office filled with chatter and camaraderie, I felt engulfed in a sea of voices, each a reminder of my inadequacy. Meetings felt like trials where I was constantly judged, my contributions scrutinized under the glare of my colleagues' expectations. I prepared extensively for discussions, rehearsing my points in front of a mirror, hoping to project confidence. Yet, when the moment arrived, I often faltered, stumbling over my words, leaving me with the familiar sting of inadequacy.

Despite the weight of anxiety, I found solace in solitude. I would retreat to my dimly lit apartment, where the cacophony of the outside world faded into a distant hum. In those quiet moments, I explored the vast landscapes of my imagination, unfettered

by expectations. I wrote in journals, pouring my thoughts onto pages like an alchemist transforming raw emotion into tangible form. In this sanctuary, I found a voice that transcended social interaction, a means of expression that felt authentic and liberating.

During these moments of introspection, I began to grasp the concept of self-acceptance. I recognized that my struggles were not a deficiency but part of the intricate tapestry of existence. Each awkward encounter shaped me into who I had become. I realized my journey was unique, a solitary path filled with challenges and triumphs. The shadows that clung to me were not merely burdens but companions on this winding road of self-discovery.

Navigating the complexities of life, I've learned to embrace the discomfort that accompanies social interactions. It is okay to feel vulnerable, to expose the cracks in my facade. There is beauty in authenticity, in being unapologetically myself, however flawed. The world may not always welcome me, but I have found a sense of belonging within myself, a refuge from the chaos surrounding me.

My story is not one of despair but a testament to resilience. I continue to grapple with social interaction, but I do so with a newfound understanding of my worth. I may never fully conquer the labyrinth of expectations, but I have learned to navigate its twisting paths with grace. I am not merely a character in someone else's narrative; I am the author of my own story, with its complexities and contradictions. In that realization, I find a flicker of hope, a promise that I, too, can carve out a space for myself in this bewildering world.

Courtesy to  
**Mathew**



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# MODELING

**M**odeling is a fundamental teaching technique used in various educational settings, particularly in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). It involves demonstrating a specific behavior that you want a learner to imitate. This method is effective across different age groups and can be particularly beneficial for individuals with developmental disorders, such as autism. The underlying principle of modeling is that people, especially children, often learn by watching others. When a model demonstrates a behavior, the observer can internalize that behavior and replicate it. This process is not just about imitation; it also encourages understanding and skill acquisition.

In the context of ABA, modeling can take several forms. It can involve a therapist, teacher, or peer demonstrating the desired behavior. The demonstration might include verbal instructions, visual cues, and physical gestures that accompany the behavior being taught. For instance, if the goal is to teach a child how to greet someone appropriately, the model might say, "Hello," while extending a hand for a handshake. This multi-faceted approach can provide the learner with a clearer understanding of what is expected.

One of the key advantages of modeling is that it creates a clear reference point for the learner. When a learner sees a behavior being performed, they can visualize it in a concrete way. This visualization can significantly enhance understanding, especially for learners who may struggle with abstract concepts or verbal instructions alone. For example, teaching social skills can be particularly challenging because they often require nuanced understanding. By observing a peer or adult demonstrating these skills in real time, a learner can gain insights into the appropriate timing, tone, and context for their application.

In addition to enhancing understanding, modeling can help build confidence in learners. When a learner sees a behavior being performed, they may feel more encouraged to attempt it themselves. This is especially true when the model is someone with whom they can relate, such as a peer. If a child observes a friend successfully engaging in a social interaction, they may feel more inclined to try the same interaction themselves. This effect can be even more pronounced when the model offers positive feedback and encouragement during the imitation process.

Effective modeling involves several components that enhance the likelihood of successful imitation. First, the model must demonstrate the behavior clearly and at an appropriate pace. If the behavior is too fast or too complicated, the learner may struggle to replicate it. The model should also ensure that the demonstration is engaging and relevant to the learner's interests. For instance, using a favorite toy or activity during the demonstration can capture the learner's attention and make the behavior more relatable.

It is also essential for the model to provide opportunities for practice. After demonstrating the desired behavior, the model should encourage the learner to attempt the behavior themselves. This might involve prompts or cues to remind the learner of the steps involved. In the case of greeting someone, the model could encourage the learner by saying, "Now you try saying hello to me." This prompts the learner to engage in the behavior while providing a supportive environment.

Another critical aspect of effective modeling is the use of reinforcement. After the learner attempts the behavior, immediate feedback is crucial. Positive reinforcement, such as verbal praise or a small reward, can help reinforce the behavior and encourage the learner to continue practicing. This reinforcement should be specific, focusing on what the learner did well. For example, saying, "Great job saying hello and shaking hands!" highlights the specific behavior that the learner successfully imitated.

Modeling can also be adapted for various contexts and learners. For instance, in a classroom setting, a teacher might use modeling to demonstrate academic skills, such as solving a math problem or reading aloud. This approach allows students to see how to approach the task and provides them with a framework for their learning. In social settings, modeling can be used to teach behaviors such as sharing, taking turns, and expressing feelings. These social skills are often critical for building relationships and navigating everyday interactions.

Incorporating modeling into interventions for individuals with autism can be particularly effective. Many individuals with autism may struggle with social skills and communication, making modeling an ideal method for teaching these essential behaviors. When using modeling in this context, it is important to ensure that the demonstrations are clear and relevant to the learner's experiences. Additionally, using peer models can be especially beneficial. Peer modeling involves having typically developing children demonstrate behaviors for children with autism. This method not only provides a relatable reference point for the learner but also promotes inclusion and positive social interactions.

Furthermore, the principles of modeling extend beyond direct imitation. Observational learning, a broader concept, occurs when individuals learn from the consequences of others' behaviors. This means that a learner can observe a model's behavior and its outcomes, leading them to understand the potential consequences of their actions. For example, if a child sees a peer receiving praise for sharing toys, they may be more inclined to share their toys as well. This type of learning highlights the importance of modeling not only the desired behavior but also the expected social and emotional responses associated with that behavior.

The effectiveness of modeling can be enhanced by combining it with other instructional methods. For instance, pairing modeling with direct instruction can create a more comprehensive learning experience. After demonstrating a behavior, the instructor can provide explicit instructions on the underlying concepts, rules, or skills related to the behavior. This combination ensures that learners not only see how to perform a behavior but also understand why it is

important and how it fits into the larger context of their learning.

Additionally, technology can play a role in enhancing modeling practices. Video modeling, for instance, allows learners to watch demonstrations at their own pace. Videos can be tailored to specific behaviors or skills and can be replayed as needed. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for learners who require more time to process information or who may benefit from repeated exposure to a behavior before attempting it themselves. The use of video modeling has gained popularity in ABA and has been shown to be effective in teaching a variety of skills, including social skills, communication, and daily living skills.

In conclusion, modeling is a versatile and effective teaching method that can significantly impact learning, especially in applied behavior analysis. It involves demonstrating desired behaviors for learners to imitate, enhancing understanding and confidence. The clear reference point provided by modeling, combined with opportunities for practice and reinforcement, creates a supportive learning environment. In particular, modeling is valuable for teaching social skills and communication to individuals with developmental disorders, such as autism. By incorporating modeling into educational practices, instructors can foster a more engaging and effective learning experience, ultimately empowering learners to acquire new skills and navigate their social environments successfully. The principles of modeling align with the core tenets of applied behavior analysis, providing a framework for effective teaching and behavior change that can benefit a diverse range of learners.

## Summery ...

Modeling is a vital teaching method in applied behavior analysis (ABA) that involves demonstrating desired behaviors for learners to imitate. This approach leverages the natural tendency to learn by observation, enhancing understanding and confidence, especially in children. Effective modeling includes clear demonstrations, engaging content, and opportunities for practice, along with immediate feedback and reinforcement. It is particularly beneficial for teaching social skills and communication to individuals with developmental disorders, such as autism, where peer modeling can foster inclusion and positive interactions.

In addition to direct imitation, modeling supports observational learning, allowing learners to understand the consequences of behaviors by watching others. By combining modeling with other instructional strategies, such as direct instruction or video modeling, educators can create a more comprehensive learning experience. Overall, modeling is a powerful framework for teaching and behavior change that effectively supports skill acquisition and enhances social navigation for diverse learners.



# Respecting Personal Space

## *Helping Your Child Respect Personal Space and Others' Belongings*

**B**uilding As parents and caregivers, one of the most important and often challenging tasks we face is helping our children learn to navigate the social world with kindness, respect, and self-awareness. This challenge becomes even more pronounced when raising a child with autism or other developmental differences, where understanding social cues and personal boundaries can take extra time and patience. One common issue that many parents encounter is a child's overwhelming curiosity about the possessions of others—especially the technology-laden items that have become a part of everyday life. In this post, I want to explore how we can teach children, especially those on the autism spectrum, to respect other people's property and use gentle hands when interacting with their peers.

Imagine being at a park, and your child sees another child wearing a bright, flashy smartwatch. Maybe the watch beeps or lights up in an irresistible way, triggering their fascination. Before you can intervene, your child rushes over, grabs the other child's wrist, and eagerly presses the buttons, not realizing that this sudden action might scare or upset the other child. For many parents, this is a situation they know all too well. It's uncomfortable, and you may feel torn between explaining your child's actions to the other parent and trying to help your child understand that touching someone else's things without permission is not okay.

In moments like these, it's crucial to remember that your child's actions aren't coming from a place of malice or ill-intent. Children with autism often struggle with impulse control and may not fully grasp the social norms that guide how we interact with others. Their curiosity, especially when it comes to things that capture their attention, can sometimes lead to behaviors that other children might find intrusive. So how do we begin to teach these important social lessons in a way that respects both your child's needs and those of others?

### **Start with Simple, Clear Expectations**

The first step is setting clear and simple expectations for your child. It's essential to communicate in a way that your child understands. Use straightforward language when explaining the behavior you expect. For instance, instead of saying, "Don't touch other people's stuff," you can say, "We keep our hands to ourselves," or "Ask before you touch." These direct phrases give your child a clear understanding of what is expected, without being overly complicated. Remember that children with autism often benefit from hearing the same message consistently across different settings. The more frequently they hear and see these expectations in action, the more likely they are to internalize them.

### **Visual Supports Make a Big Difference**

Children on the spectrum often respond well to visual supports, and these can be invaluable





in helping them understand social norms. Social stories are one powerful tool in your parenting toolbox. A social story is a short narrative, often accompanied by pictures, that explains a particular situation and the expected behavior within that context.

For example, you could create a social story about going to the park and encountering other children. The story might include a picture of your child seeing another child with a smartwatch and a reminder that we need to ask permission before touching someone else's things. By framing these interactions through a story that they can relate to, your child may better understand what's expected of them when the real-life scenario unfolds.

Additionally, visual aids like charts or pictures can help reinforce lessons about keeping personal space and using gentle hands. You can make these supports easily accessible at home or on the go to refer to whenever necessary.

**Practice Makes Progress: Role-Playing**

Role-playing is another great way to teach social skills. It gives your child the chance to practice appropriate behaviors

in a safe, controlled environment. You can take turns playing different roles, such as pretending to be another child wearing a watch, while your child practices asking if they can see or touch the watch. This type of rehearsal not only builds confidence but also gives your child the tools to handle real-life situations.

When practicing, you can focus on key moments, like asking permission, respecting the answer (whether it's yes or no), and using gentle hands. These practice sessions can help your child become more comfortable with these interactions and can make it easier for them to apply what they've learned in social settings.

**Teaching Personal Space: Make it Visual and Fun**

One of the most important aspects of social interactions is understanding personal space, which can be difficult for children, especially those with autism. One method is to create a physical or visual representation of personal space. For example, you can use a hula hoop or an imaginary "bubble" around each person to show your child how much space is considered appropriate between them and others. By using a fun,

tangible object to define personal boundaries, your child may begin to develop a clearer sense of how close is too close.

This concept of personal space is important not only in terms of physical proximity but also in learning to respect the belongings of others. When your child can see a clear boundary, it may help them understand that certain things are off-limits unless permission is granted.

**Reinforce Positive Behavior with Praise and Encouragement**

One of the most effective ways to teach children new behaviors is through positive reinforcement. Whenever your child uses gentle hands or asks for permission before touching something that isn't theirs, make sure to acknowledge and praise that behavior. Immediate feedback helps reinforce the positive action, making it more likely that your child will repeat it in the future. Simple phrases like, "I love how you asked before touching!" or "Great job using gentle hands!" can make a big impact on their willingness to keep practicing these skills.

**Establishing Structure and Predictability**

For children with autism, predictability and routine are key to reducing anxiety and impulsive behaviors. When a child knows what to expect from their day, they are often less likely to act out impulsively. By creating a structured routine that includes time for sensory activities, you can help channel their need to touch or explore in a more appropriate way.

For example, if your child loves pushing buttons, you might include time in their day for playing with sensory toys that allow them to engage in this activity. This can provide an outlet for their curiosity while also helping them learn to manage those impulses in social settings.

**Prepare in Advance for Social Situations**

Before heading out to social events or outings, take a few minutes to prepare your child for what they might encounter. Use social stories or role-playing to remind them of the rules: gentle hands, asking permission, and respecting personal space. For example, before going to the park, you might remind your child, "Remember, if we see someone with a cool watch, we ask before we touch."

This kind of preparation helps your child mentally rehearse the expectations and reduces the likelihood of impulsive behavior when they encounter exciting stimuli.

**Teaching Empathy: Helping Children Understand Feelings**

For many children with autism, understanding emotions—both their own and others'—can be difficult. However, teaching empathy is a critical part of helping them navigate social situations. Using simple language, you can explain how certain actions might make others feel. For example, you might say, "When we grab someone's wrist, it can make them feel scared. Let's use gentle hands to make them feel safe."

Helping your child recognize emotions like "happy," "scared," or "upset" can foster empathy and encourage them to think about how their actions affect others.

**Consistency Across Environments**

One important aspect of teaching social skills is consistency. Ensure that everyone involved in your child's life—whether it's teachers, caregivers, or family members—are on the same page about the expectations and strategies you're using. When your child receives consistent feedback and reinforcement across different environments, the lessons you're teaching are more likely to stick.

**Be Patient and Celebrate Progress**

It's important to remember that teaching social skills takes time, especially for children with autism. Progress may be slow, and there will inevitably be

setbacks along the way. However, it's important to celebrate the small victories. Whether it's your child asking for permission before touching something or simply keeping their hands to themselves for a little longer, each step forward is a sign of growth.

By maintaining patience, staying consistent, and reinforcing positive behaviors, you can help your child develop the social skills they need to navigate the world around them with confidence and respect.

In the end, teaching a child to respect personal space and others' belongings

is a journey. With time, patience, and the right strategies, your child can learn to interact in ways that are kind, respectful, and socially appropriate. Through clear communication, visual supports, and consistent practice, you can guide your child in developing these essential skills while also honoring their unique way of seeing the world.



**Tips ...**

An additional tip is to use a token system for reinforcement. This strategy can help your child visualize their progress and stay motivated. Create a system where your child earns tokens (such as stars, stickers, or points) for every instance of using gentle hands or asking permission before touching something. Once they accumulate a certain number of tokens, they can exchange them for a reward, like extra playtime or a favorite activity.

This method not only encourages positive behavior but also provides an immediate and tangible way for your child to see their success. Over time, this can help them internalize these behaviors as part of their everyday interactions.





“

*Can't we develop a plan together?*

”

It was one of those crisp autumn days when the sun filtered softly through the amber and crimson leaves, a sight that had once stirred something deep within Marie, yet today only thickened the cloud of anxiety that had settled over her. She stood in her modest kitchen, the smell of stale coffee wafting around her, mingling with the faint odor of something burnt from the previous night's dinner that had lingered a moment too long. Ethan, her youngest, nearly two and a half, the boy with tousled hair and bright, searching eyes, was playing quietly in the corner, lost in the world of toys strewn about like the remnants of a shipwreck. His laughter, usually a melody of joy, felt muted, overshadowed by the weight of the letter that lay folded, crumpled in the pocket of her cardigan, a small harbinger of doom.

The day had begun as any other, a hurried breakfast and frantic race to get the boys ready for daycare. Noah, her eldest, a nonverbal child drifting along the spectrum, had taken his time, engrossed in the flicker of his favorite book, while Ethan buzzed around like a restless bee, flitting from one toy to the next. The morning ritual felt like a delicate dance, and yet, in the chaos of it all, Marie felt a sudden pang of uncertainty, a disquieting sense that something was askew. But life, in its relentless pace, demanded her attention, and she shoved the thought aside.

But now, after the day's hustle and bustle, she found herself staring blankly at the walls of her kitchen, which seemed to close in on her. The letter was an unexpected intrusion into her meticulously constructed world—a world where she had hoped to nurture Ethan's development away from Noah's shadow, to give him a chance to flourish among other children, to find his own voice, his own path. Yet here it was, the specter of termination looming, the ink on the paper sharp and unforgiving, echoing the silent fears she had harbored in the recesses of her mind.

Marie unfolded the letter again, its harshness biting into her thoughts. "Your son, Ethan, will no longer be able to attend our daycare as of next week. We believe that he requires one-on-one care that we are unable to provide in our current setting." The words

reverberated, a thunderclap in her mind, a pronouncement she hadn't anticipated, didn't understand. She had sought the guidance of professionals, the assurance of others that Ethan was merely a toddler navigating the tumult of his young life. He chewed on things, yes, like any child discovering the world with their mouth. He threw toys, a harmless act of exploration, an invitation to engage in the chaos of play. And yes, perhaps he had been seen with his hands in his diaper, a gesture of confusion or curiosity. All of these behaviors had woven themselves into the fabric of his existence, but how could they signify the need for separation?

Tom arrived home just as the sun dipped low in the sky, casting a golden hue across the kitchen. He opened the door, his expression shifting from the weariness of a long day at work to concern as he noticed the somber atmosphere. The letter had already begun to fray at the edges of her resolve. She handed it to him, feeling the air crackle between them, an unspoken understanding looming in the silence.

As Tom read, Marie watched the play of emotions dance across his face: confusion, anger, then a settled determination. "They can't just dismiss him like this without discussing it with us," he muttered, his voice low, like the rumble of thunder before a storm. "It's not fair. They had to know what we were dealing with when we enrolled him. Ethan's just a kid, Marie—a two-year-old exploring his world, just like any other."

But the words from the letter were sharp and unyielding. The reasons were laid bare: "1) Chewing on everything at daycare. 2) Throwing toys. 3) Hands in his diaper a lot." Each point struck like a hammer against the fragile shell of her hopes, cracking them further, sending shards of doubt ricocheting through her mind. The boys had been different, yes, but hadn't they all been children once? Wasn't it the way of toddlers to explore, to test boundaries, to challenge the fabric of their surroundings?

Tom sat down, his fingers running through his hair in exasperation. "We need to go to that meeting on Tuesday. We have to confront this. We can't let them just send him away

# The Daycare Dilemma

without a fight." His determination sparked something in her—a flicker of resolve amidst the encroaching shadows of despair.

In the days leading up to the meeting, they rallied themselves. The world felt unsteady as they navigated the murky waters of early childhood development, parenting, and the looming specter of autism that had touched their family like an unwelcome guest. They spoke to Ethan, gently reminding him when he chewed on toys, offering him safe alternatives, bright colored chewable items designed for sensory exploration. They redirected his throwing, guiding him to play with soft balls in a designated area where it was safe to toss and tumble without fear of injury. As they engaged with him, the little joys of discovery unfolded, laughter punctuating the air, echoing against the walls of uncertainty.

Yet there were nights when Marie lay awake, the weight of worry pressing against her chest like a heavy blanket. Could they truly work through this? Would the daycare reconsider their decision if they showed commitment and understanding? Each question spiraled into the next, a whirlwind of anxiety that danced in the corners of her mind.

The day of the meeting arrived, the sun peeking through the clouds as if unsure whether to shine or retreat. They entered the daycare, the familiar smell of crayons and laughter wrapping around them. But today, it felt different, charged with an electric tension. The director, a woman with stern features softened by a warm smile, greeted them. They took their seats, the weight of the letter hanging in the air like a dense fog.

The director began, her voice steady, though the underlying tension was palpable. "Ethan is a wonderful child, but his behaviors have been challenging for us to manage. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all the children, and we've noticed that Ethan's chewing, throwing, and the hands in his diaper are becoming increasingly disruptive."

Marie felt a lump form in her throat, the words echoing the fears that had gnawed at her. "But these are behaviors typical of toddlers,



“

*It's true that many toddlers engage in similar behaviors.*

”

aren't they? He's just exploring, discovering. We're working with him at home, and we've seen some progress.”

The teacher, Ms. Ellen, spoke up, her tone softer than the director's, but laced with the seriousness of their situation. “It's true that many toddlers engage in similar behaviors. But Ethan's intensity and frequency have made it difficult for us to ensure a safe space for all the children. We've noticed that he often chews on inappropriate objects, like other children's toys, and the throwing can lead to potential injuries. His hands in his diaper seem to be a sensory-seeking behavior that is distracting during group activities.”

A wave of understanding washed over Marie, yet a pang of frustration bubbled beneath the surface. They had been hoping for collaboration, for a path forward, yet the weight of their reality settled heavily on her shoulders. “Can't we develop a plan together? Surely, we can find a way to work on these behaviors in the classroom, in conjunction with what we're doing at home. He doesn't need to be separated from his peers.”



Tom leaned forward, his voice steady, yet tinged with urgency. “He's not a difficult child. He's just a child who needs guidance, just like any other. We can help. We're willing to do whatever it takes. If we can try some strategies, give it time, we might see improvement. But this feels premature.”

The director considered their words, her expression contemplative. “We understand your concerns, and we appreciate your willingness to work together. Perhaps we can implement some strategies on a trial basis. We could introduce some sensory tools for chewing and create a small area where throwing is acceptable, using soft objects only. But we need to make it clear that if behaviors don't improve, we may have to revisit the situation.”

A glimmer of hope flickered within Marie's heart, igniting a small flame of determination. “That sounds fair. We'll commit to it. We'll

be proactive in working with you. Let's give Ethan the chance he deserves.”

As they left the meeting, the sunlight seemed to shine a little brighter, the colors of autumn more vibrant. The weight that had pressed on her shoulders began to lift, replaced with the resolve to fight for her son, to seek understanding and support rather than a swift termination. The days ahead would be challenging, no doubt, but Marie felt a surge of optimism. Ethan would have his chance to thrive, to find his voice among the echoes of laughter and play, and together, they would navigate the winding path of parenthood, finding strength in unity, in love, in the beautiful chaos of their lives.

And as they walked down the street, hand in hand, she caught sight of Ethan running ahead, his laughter rising like a sweet melody into the crisp air. He was still their curious boy, still exploring, still discovering. And with each step forward, Marie knew they were embarking on a journey not just for Ethan but for their entire family—a journey where understanding, compassion, and growth would flourish in the golden light of hope.

**Quick Tip**

For the meeting with the daycare, bring specific examples of how you're addressing Ethan's behaviors at home. Document any strategies you've used and any improvements you've noticed. This will show that you're actively working on the issues and encourage a collaborative discussion.





# WHY WHAT HOW

My just turned 3 year old non-verbal little man has an obsession with getting his juice and spitting it into anything he can get his hands on for example mega blocks, pop it's and bowls. It's got so bad that I've had to pull my carpets up and have laminate fitted because he destroyed them.

Addressing the behavior of spitting juice can be multifaceted, focusing on understanding the behavior, providing alternatives, and implementing strategies.

Start by closely observing your child. Notice when the spitting occurs. Is it linked to certain activities, times of day, or emotions? Sometimes, children engage in such behaviors for various reasons, like seeking sensory stimulation or expressing frustration. Understanding these triggers can help in finding a solution.

Once you have identified the triggers, consider offering more appropriate sensory experiences. Create a dedicated sensory play area where your child can explore different textures. You could include water play, sand, or play dough. This way, he can satisfy his need for exploration without the risk of damaging belongings or causing messes elsewhere.

You can also set clear boundaries regarding juice consumption. Establish a specific place where he can drink juice, like a high chair or a designated table. Use simple language and visuals to reinforce these rules. For example, you can show him pictures of appropriate behavior, like drinking from a cup rather than spitting.

When he does follow the rules, reinforce that behavior with praise or small rewards,

such as stickers or extra playtime. Positive reinforcement encourages him to repeat the desired actions.

Additionally, consider providing him with cups that are less likely to spill or a straw to help him drink more easily. If the spitting continues, consider involving a professional who specializes in child behavior. They can offer personalized strategies and support for both you and your child.

Lastly, patience is key. Changes in behavior often take time, and your consistent efforts will gradually help guide your child toward more acceptable ways to express himself.

I have a 1yr old who would not let me touch his hair for nothing!!! It's severe! Could that be a sign of autism ?

It's understandable to be concerned when a child shows strong reactions to certain types of touch, like not wanting their hair touched. Many children go through phases where they have preferences about how they are handled, and this can be a normal part of their development.

When children are around one year old, they are still figuring out their bodies and how they interact with the world. At this age, they may develop likes and dislikes about how they feel, and they may not yet have the language to express their feelings. Some children might be more sensitive to touch, while others might be less so. This sensitivity can manifest in different ways, such as avoiding hair brushing or becoming upset when their hair is touched.

While it is true that children on the autism spectrum may exhibit sensory sensitivities, such as being particularly sensitive to touch or certain textures, it's important to note that not all children with similar behaviors have autism. Many neurotypical children can also show strong preferences and aversions at this age due to a variety of reasons.

Other factors that might contribute to this behavior include:

1. **Developmental Stage:** Children are constantly exploring their surroundings and learning how to communicate their needs and feelings. A one-year-old might be asserting independence and wanting to control their own bodies.
2. **Sensory Preferences:** Some children have different thresholds for sensory input. A child might find certain sensations uncomfortable, whether it's the feeling of a brush, a hand in their hair, or even the sound of brushing.
3. **Past Experiences:** If a child had an uncomfortable experience during hair brushing or styling, they may associate that sensation with discomfort and resist it in the

future.

4. **Individual Differences:** Just like adults, children have individual personalities. Some are naturally more sensitive or cautious, while others are more open to new experiences.

If you're concerned about your child's behavior, it may be helpful to observe any patterns. Does your child react the same way to other forms of touch, like hugging or being held? Are there specific times when they are more resistant? Keeping a record of these behaviors can provide valuable information if you decide to speak with a pediatrician or a child development specialist.

Ultimately, if you feel worried about your child's development, it's always best to consult with a professional. They can conduct

“  
Autism itself typically involves challenges with communication  
”

assessments to determine if there are any developmental concerns and offer guidance tailored to your child's specific needs. Early intervention, if needed, can make a significant difference in a child's development and help parents navigate challenges effectively.

I have what most people would consider "high functioning" autism but recently I have been really anxious and have brought this plushy with me almost anywhere I go because for some reason it's calming to me. Is this weird? (I'm almost 19)

To Using a plushy for comfort, especially when dealing with anxiety, is a practical and effective strategy for many people, including those on the autism spectrum. Plushies can provide a sense of security and familiarity that helps in coping with overwhelming feelings. They often serve as a tactile tool, giving something to hold onto when anxiety rises. This physical connection can help ground you and remind you of positive experiences or memories associated with the plushy.

Carrying a plushy into different environments can also help ease the transition between spaces, particularly if you find social

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situations or new places stressful. It's a way to maintain a connection to comfort, especially when you may be feeling out of your comfort zone.

In your late teens, as you approach adulthood, it's natural to explore how you cope with stress and anxiety. While some may feel pressure to conform to societal expectations of what's "appropriate" for their age, it's essential to recognize that everyone has unique ways of managing their emotions. Carrying a plushy is just one of many tools you can use.

As you navigate through this period, you might find it helpful to reflect on other strategies that help you feel calm or secure. This could include mindfulness exercises, grounding techniques, or deep breathing. Developing a toolkit of strategies can be beneficial in managing anxiety more effectively. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to cope—what's important is finding what works best for you.

**My son struggles to transition from the house to car and sometimes from store to car. He has to run back and forth in and out until he meets some sensory input combination (tapping staring touching)... till he finally transitions. It could take hours (and has). Struggling to help him. Imagine taking hours to finally enter the car and once he's in he's sweating from how hard he's trying... anyone see this? OCD ?**

Your son's behavior seems to involve a combination of sensory needs and repetitive actions, which may serve as a way to reduce discomfort or anxiety during transitions. From an applied behavior analysis (ABA) perspective, we would first try to understand the function of the behavior. This involves looking at what is motivating or reinforcing his actions, which in this case could be sensory stimulation, anxiety reduction, or even a form of control over his environment.

In ABA, behavior is often analyzed through what is called the ABC model: Antecedent (what happens before the behavior), Behavior (the specific actions), and Consequence (what happens after the behavior). By carefully observing your son's routine, you could start to notice patterns in the antecedents and consequences of his behavior. For example, does he become more anxious or engage in repetitive behaviors when the environment is busy, loud, or when transitions are unstructured? Are there specific sensory inputs he seems to seek out (e.g., tapping, touching) that help him feel calm or regulated?

Once you have a clearer understanding of these patterns, you can start to implement

changes. One approach could be to introduce a structured routine around transitions. For example, before going from the house to the car, you could give him a visual schedule or a checklist that includes a brief sensory break where he can engage in an activity that meets his sensory needs in a controlled way (like squeezing a stress ball, tapping an object, or doing deep breathing exercises). This gives him the sensory input he's seeking, but in a more organized and time-bound manner.

Gradually, you would try to decrease the time spent on these behaviors or rituals while reinforcing successful transitions. Reinforcement is key in ABA. You would reward him immediately after he completes the transition without going through the extensive back-and-forth. The reward could be something he values, like praise, a preferred activity, or even a small tangible item. Over time, this positive reinforcement would help him associate the transition with something enjoyable, reducing his need to engage in the repetitive behaviors.

If the behavior is ritualistic and linked to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), similar principles can apply, though it may require more gradual fading of the rituals and might need the support of a therapist familiar with exposure and response prevention (ERP) techniques. ERP is often used for OCD and involves slowly reducing the time spent on compulsive rituals while encouraging the individual to tolerate the anxiety that arises without completing the ritual.

Collaborating with a behavior analyst or specialist who can conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) would likely be very helpful. They could develop a behavior intervention plan (BIP) tailored specifically to your son's needs, identifying what drives the behavior and creating a structured plan to help him transition more easily.

The goal is to help him find more effective ways to cope with the discomfort he experiences during transitions while reducing the need for time-consuming rituals. This would likely take time and gradual progress, but with the right strategies, it can make transitions smoother for both of you.

**Advice needed for silent hair clippers or alike to conquer hair cut for 6 year old.**

**Very sensitive.**

When working with a child who is sensitive to sounds during haircuts, particularly a six-year-old, it's important to approach the situation gradually and thoughtfully. Some children have heightened reactions to the sound and sensation of clippers, which can make the experience overwhelming. A quiet or silent hair clipper is a useful tool because it reduces the level of noise, which can be one of the main triggers for discomfort.

Look for hair clippers designed specifically for low noise. Many companies make "whisper-quiet" or "silent" clippers, which are intended to produce minimal sound while still being effective for cutting hair. Cordless models are often less intimidating for children because they eliminate the additional noise created by a cord dragging or moving. They can also provide more freedom of movement, allowing you to position the clippers in ways that are most comfortable for the child.

Before you begin cutting hair, it's important to introduce the clippers in a non-threatening way. This helps build comfort and reduces anxiety over time. First, show the clippers to the child while they're turned off. Let them hold the clippers, feel them, and even press the buttons if they are curious. This allows the child to explore the tool without the added element of sound or sensation. You can also use this time to explain what the clippers do in simple terms, letting the child know that it's a tool used for making hair look neat.

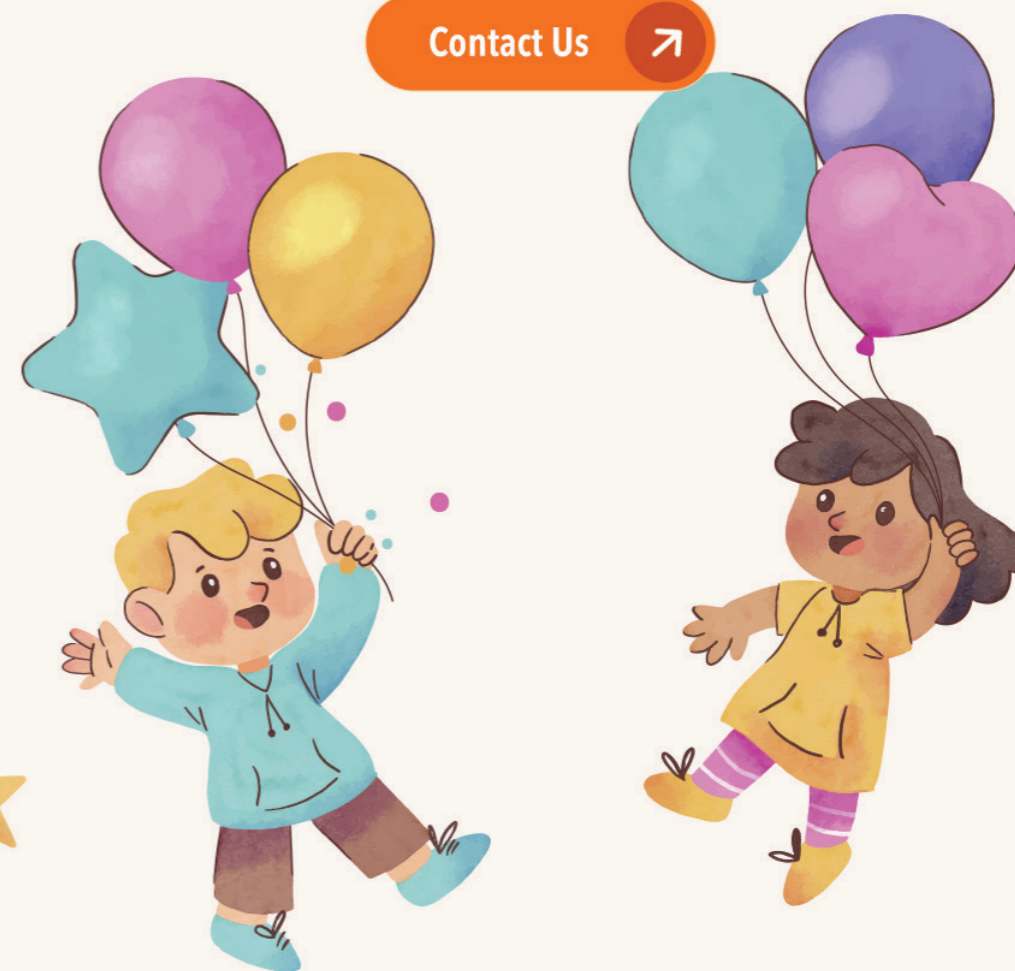
Once the child is familiar with the clippers, you can turn them on, but don't immediately start cutting hair. Let the child hear the sound from a distance, gradually bringing it closer as they show signs of being more comfortable. Watch their body language and reactions closely. If they seem distressed, take a step back and give them time to adjust. The key is to move at their pace to build trust.

When it comes to trimming sideburns, using blunt-edged or rounded scissors may be a more gentle approach at first, especially if the child remains uneasy around clippers. Scissors make less noise and provide more control for small, precise cuts. You can trim the sideburns when the child is in a calm and relaxed state, perhaps after a bath when they're already used to some grooming routines.



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**FAQ ...**

- **How can I make the haircut experience easier for my child?**

Keep sessions short, provide reassurance, and take breaks when needed. Positive reinforcement and a calm environment can help reduce anxiety over time. Blunt-edged or rounded scissors are quieter and less intimidating than clippers. They allow for more precise trimming in a calmer environment.





Dear **Autism Support Group** Community,  
We are thrilled to present our monthly magazine dedicated to the vibrant and diverse Autistic community. In our magazine, you'll find inspiring stories, insightful articles, and beautiful photos contributed by readers like you.

#### Why is it free ?

Because we believe in inclusivity! Everyone deserves access to meaningful content. However, we also believe in supporting our amazing team of designers, writers, and coordinators who bring this magazine to life.



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With gratitude,



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# When Your Child Talks to “Ear”

## *A Parent's Journey*

**I**n Hi everyone. I'm not usually one to write like this, but I feel like I need to share what's been going on with my son. Maybe you've been through something similar, or maybe you're just as confused and worried as I was – still am, honestly.

For the past six months, my 12-year-old son has been talking... to himself. It's not like how we all sometimes mutter under our breath or think out loud. He holds his hand up to his ear, like he's on an imaginary phone, and has full-on conversations. And when I ask who he's talking to, he says, “I'm talking to \*Ear\*.” At first, I was baffled. I thought it was a phase, maybe a quirky habit. But it didn't go away.

He started doing it more often. Sometimes, he would be in the middle of something – eating dinner, doing homework, even in the middle of a conversation with me – and suddenly, it's like he wasn't in the room with us anymore. He'd go into this other world where \*Ear\* exists, and the voice he uses... it's different. Not his usual tone. A little deeper. Almost like an alter ego.

As a parent, you can imagine how concerning this was. I had no idea what was going on. I started to worry about everything – his mental health, social life, school. Would other kids notice? Would they make fun of him? So, I did what most of us would do: I asked. Over and over again. “Who's \*Ear\*? Why do you talk to him? What are you talking about?” But every time, my son would just shrug and say, “I like talking to \*Ear\*. He helps me.”

That's when I realized that this wasn't something he was doing for attention. He wasn't trying to be difficult or weird. It was something deeper, something he needed. I just didn't understand \*why\*. I spoke with his teacher and a developmental pediatrician, hoping

for some insight. Right now, he's being observed by a behaviorist in the classroom, and we're waiting for the pediatrician to collect data on his behavior. The pediatrician mentioned something interesting that I hadn't thought of before: maybe he's using this as a way to self-regulate, to manage his emotions or stress. But what does that even mean? How does talking to an imaginary figure like \*Ear\* help him regulate?

I've been trying to wrap my head around this for months now. It's frustrating because, as a parent, you just want to help your child. You want to fix whatever problem they're facing, make life easier for them. But I've come to realize that sometimes, kids don't need us to “fix” things right away. Sometimes they need us to just... understand, or at least try to. I don't have all the answers yet. We're still figuring it out. But here's what I've learned so far, and maybe this will help another parent out there.

It's so easy to panic when you see your child acting differently, especially when you don't understand why. But instead of jumping to conclusions, I had to remind myself to stay curious. Ask questions, but without fear or judgment. Your child might not be ready to explain it all, but keeping the door open for them to talk when they're ready is so important.

Sure, some things kids do are passing phases. But when a behavior continues for months, there might be more to it. I'm glad I trusted my gut and sought out professional advice, even if I'm still waiting for answers. Early intervention is always better than wishing you'd done something sooner.

My son talks to \*Ear\* – that's his thing. Maybe for him, it's a way to deal with stress or feelings he doesn't quite know how to express. I still don't completely understand it, but I'm starting to see that

this might be his way of handling the world around him. And honestly, we all have our quirks, don't we? Some people doodle, some people talk to themselves. My son just happens to do it with \*Ear\*.

This is probably the hardest part for me. I like being in control, knowing what's going on with my child, and fixing problems as soon as they pop up. But this has been a humbling experience. I've had to accept that this is a process, and I may not understand it fully right away. That's okay. What matters is that I'm showing up for him every step of the way.

If there's one piece of advice I can offer from all of this, it's this: Don't panic. Your child is figuring out the world in their own way, and sometimes that looks different than we expect. Maybe it's a sign they need help, or maybe it's just part of their unique way of being. Either way, it's our job to listen, to seek help when we need it, and to be there as they navigate their own path.

We're still in the middle of our journey with \*Ear\*, but I'm hopeful. And if you're in a similar situation, know that you're not alone. It's okay to feel confused, to worry, and to ask for help. Just don't forget to breathe, be patient, and trust that you and your child will figure it out together.







## Share Your Moments With Us

Dear members of our incredible **Autism Support Group** and cherished readers,

We invite you to be a part of our vibrant gallery! Whether it's heartwarming moments, achievements, or snapshots of daily life, we'd love to showcase the beautiful diversity of our community.

Send your photos to [magkaleidoscope@gmail.com](mailto:magkaleidoscope@gmail.com), and let's create a visual tapestry that celebrates the spirit of togetherness. Your moments matter, and each image contributes to the mosaic of our shared journey.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community!

With warmth,  
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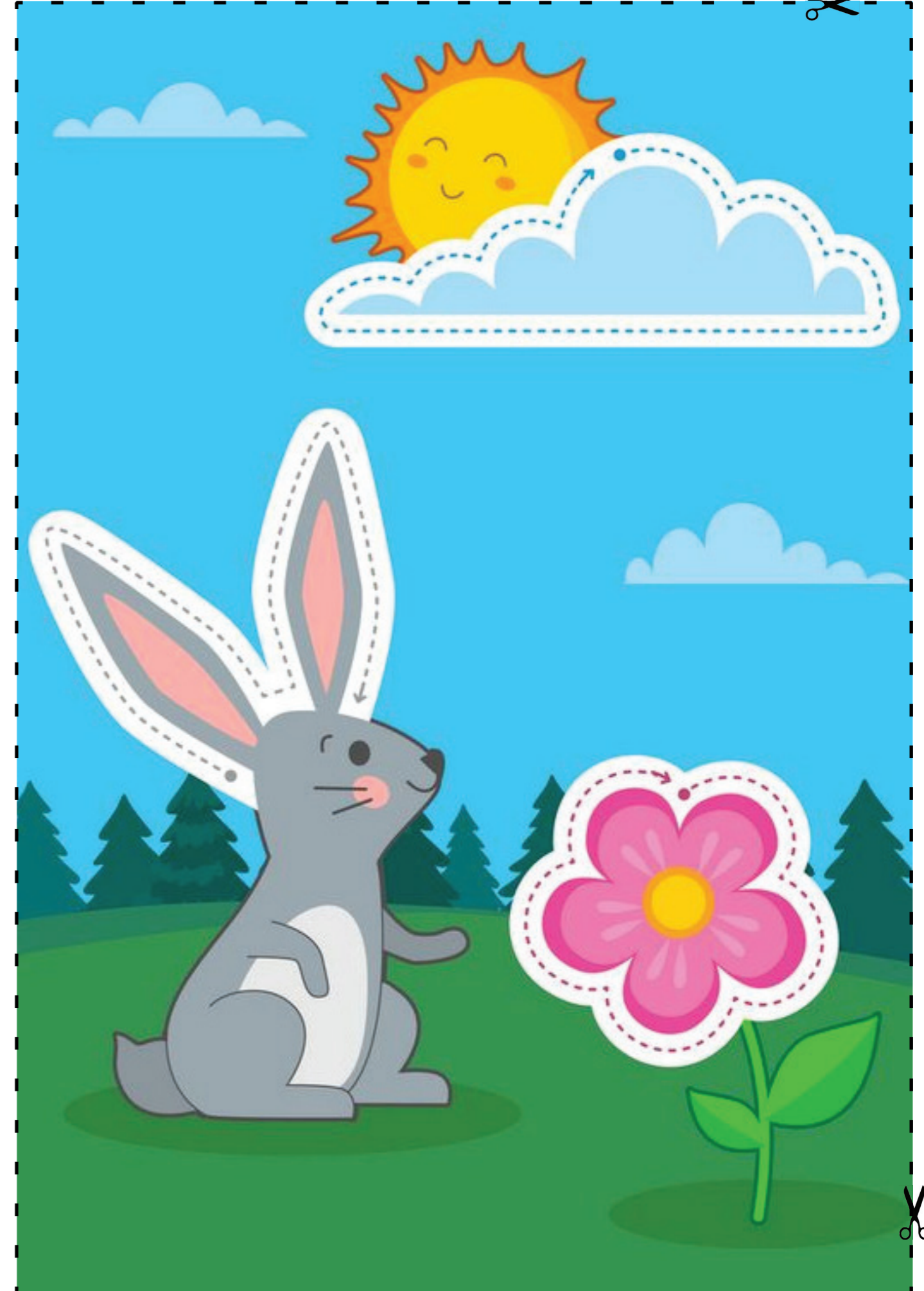


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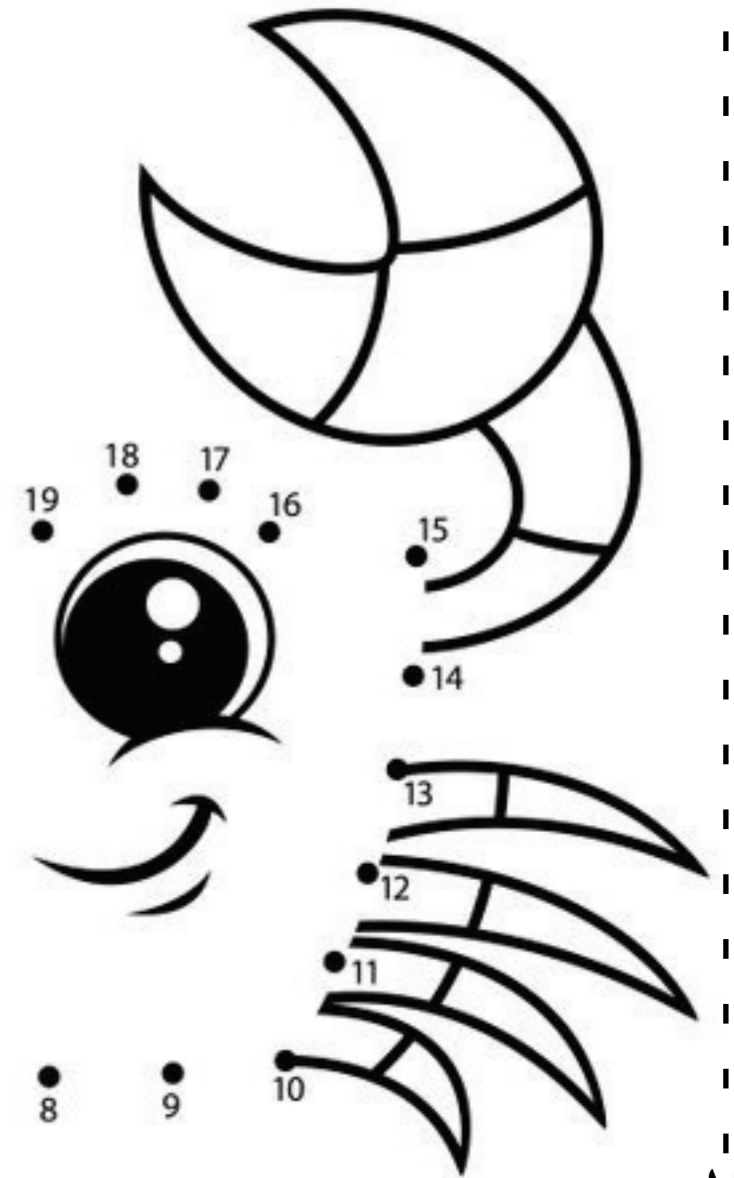
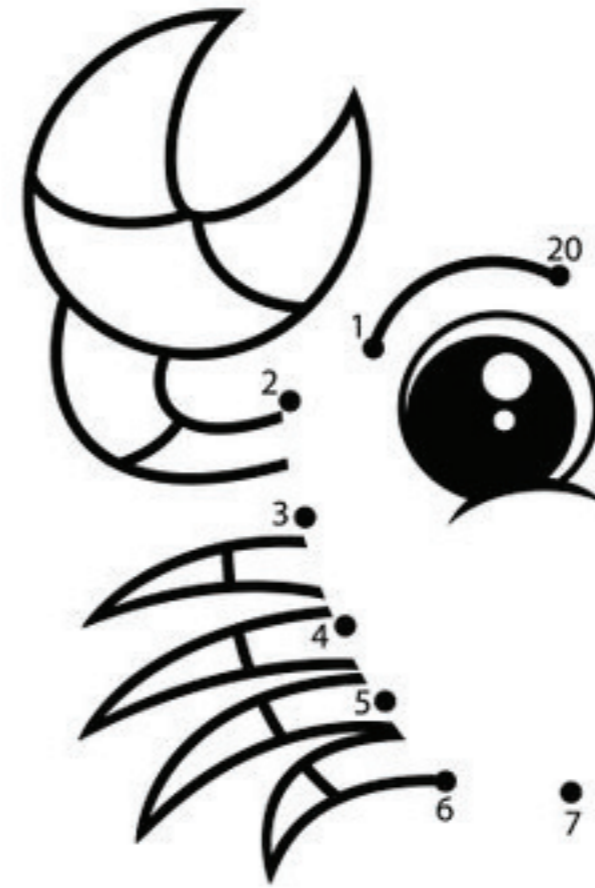




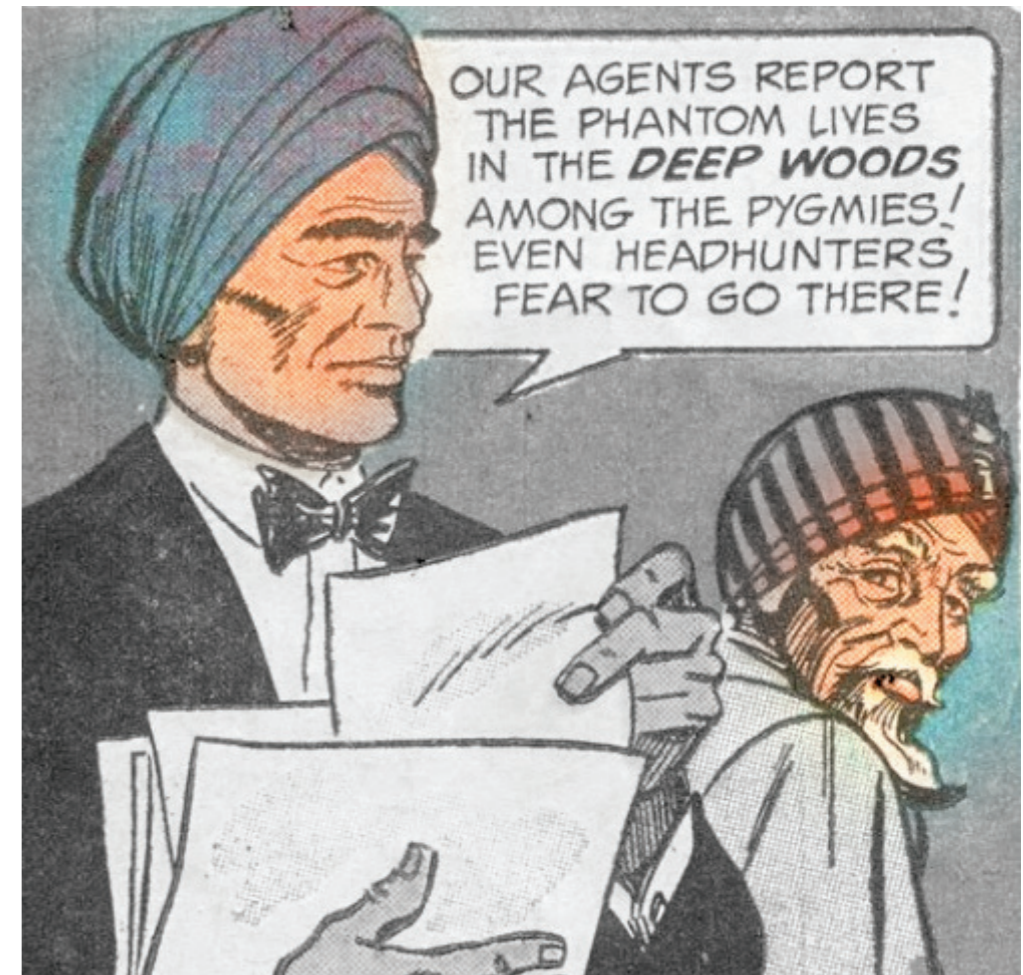
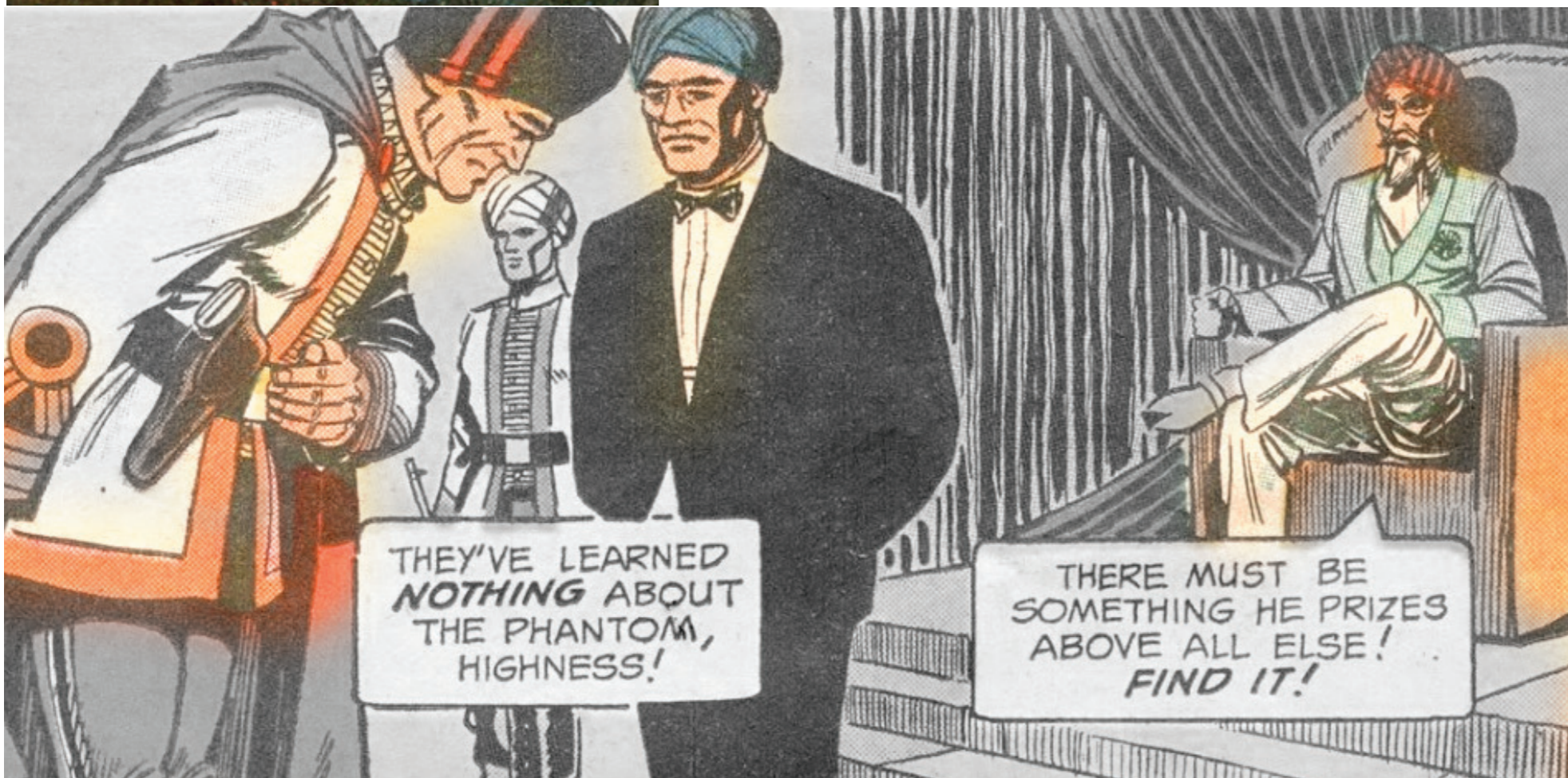
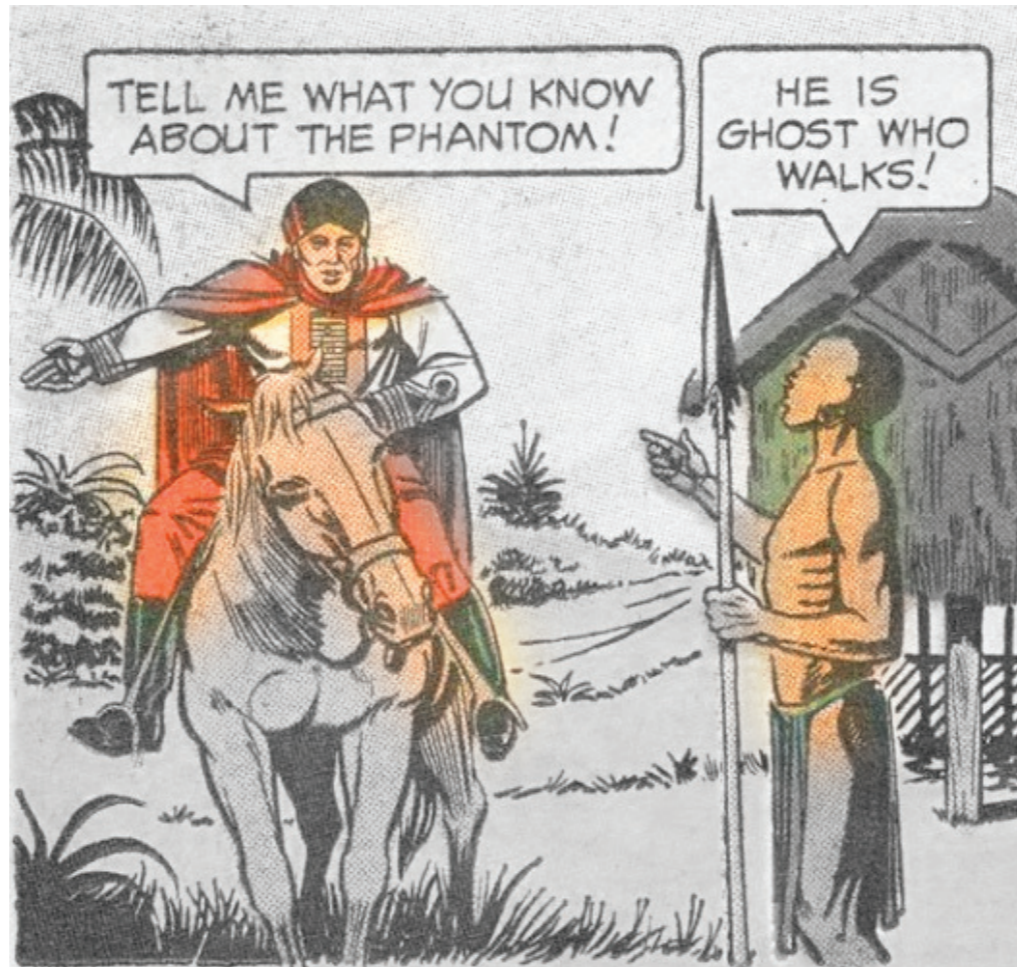
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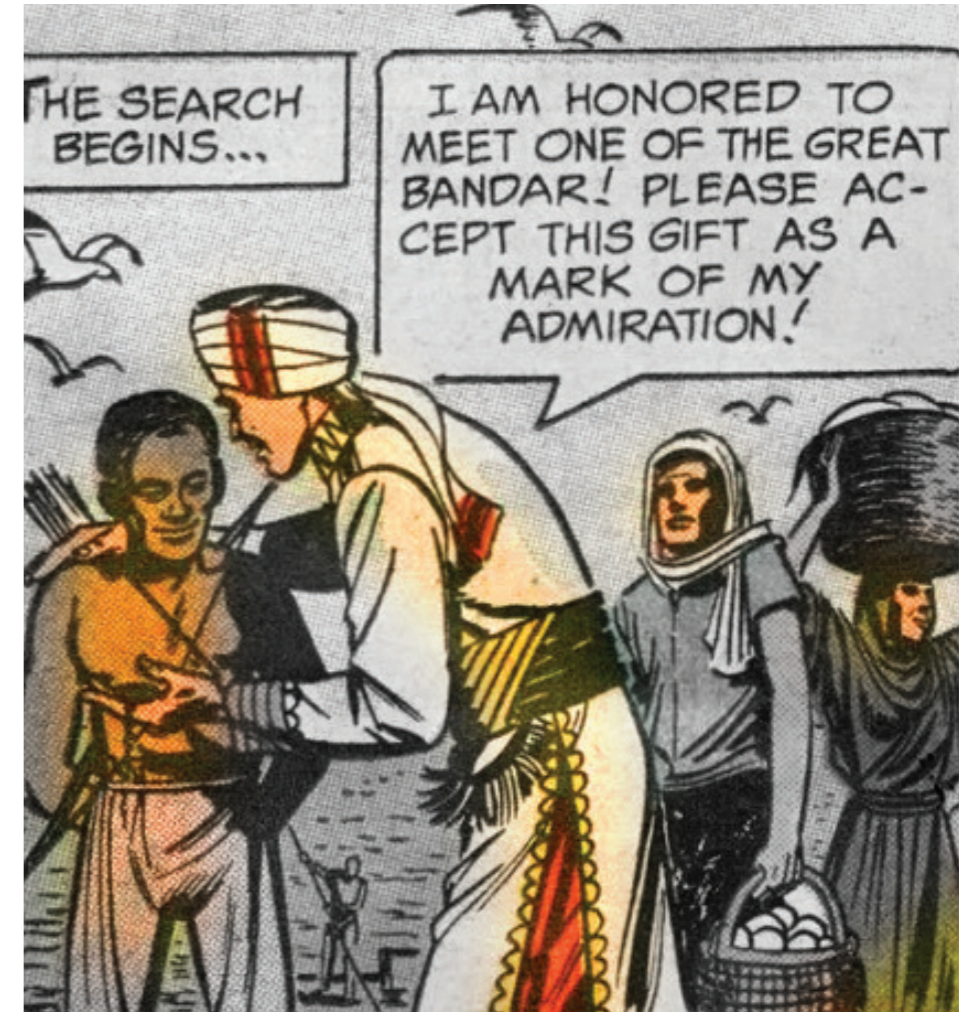
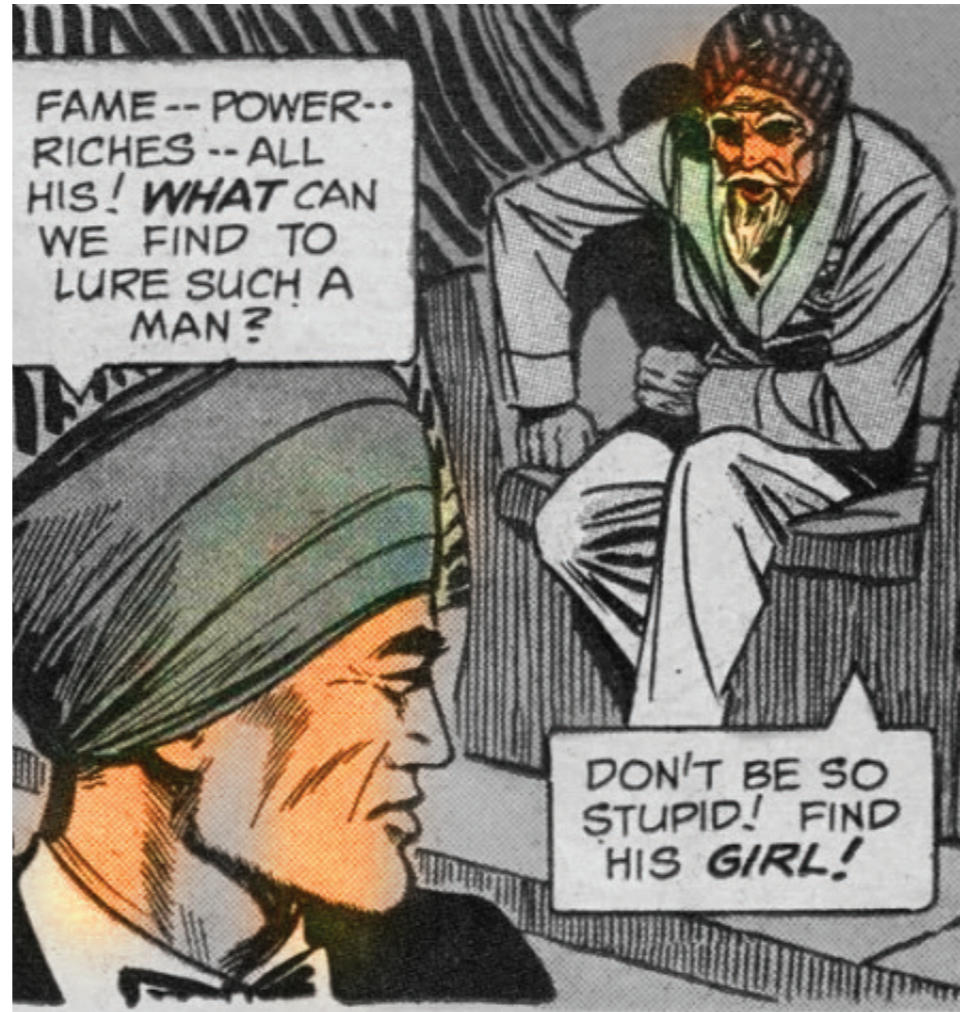














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