

Aut-spirations

Debi Taylor



Table of Contents

Gratitude..... 3
Wisdom 5
Tips 9
Inspiration 14
Humor..... 17
Perspective 21



Gratitude

Saying to the Universe: "Thank you for everything. I have no complaints whatsoever." Start each day like this!! You will be surprised by the shift and lightness of your day when you start with gratitude.

I went on a dinner date with my awesome son. What a beautiful mind and peculiar view this boy has.

The Universe gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say 'thank you'? ~William Ward

Better to lose count while naming your blessings than to lose your blessings to counting your troubles.

Yesterday's events would have sent the old me crying for hours; I used them as inspiration for a third tier to my research. Gratitude! It's sometimes about perspective – can you find a lesson, a blessing, or an inspiration in a frazzling situation? It's not always easy, but it helps!

Sitting in the moment, quietly, with my youngest angel... in awe of his gifts and graces. Thank you!



Wisdom

"Even if there is nothing to laugh about, laugh on credit." ~Unknown Have you ever been at your wits' end, about to completely lose your patience, and you just started laughing at the ridiculousness of what made you so angry? It's true medicine! Especially when it's your child's behavior that made you so upset...

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten. Do you find yourself continually trying the same disciplines and responses to problems, hoping "this time it will work"? Think about it ☺

"If you just set people in motion they'll heal themselves." ~Gabrielle Roth Don't dampen your child's potential with limitations... they just might surprise you with what they CAN do!

Flexible people never get bent out of shape. We all know that plans may change in an instant when it comes to our children. Go with the flow.

"We crucify ourselves between two thieves: regret for yesterday & fear of tomorrow." ~F. Oursler If it's one thing my child with Autism has taught me, it's how to live in the NOW.

BE the sun instead of perpetually struggling to grow toward it. The best thing you can do for your children is lead by example. Be happy. Take care of yourself. You can't give to your family if you are depleted!

"If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet, you'd best teach it to dance." George Bernard Shaw Accept where you are. There is nothing wrong, we're all on a journey!

"For success in science and art a dash of autism is essential." ~Hans Asperger

When you give up the need for validation and sympathy life responds with more positive situations. It's true! This is one that really opened my eyes, painful as it was! I had to detach my identity from the "how hard it is to be a single parent of a special needs child" story. When I finally did, it was magical!

"Been down one time, been down two times, I'm never goin' back again" ~Lindsey Buckingham Once you DO successfully change your perspective, it becomes clear that you no longer want the pity party ☺

"If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging." ~Cowboy Proverb (I'll let this one speak for itself)

"The past is a guidepost, not a hitching post." ~L Thomas Holdcroft So many times I've disciplined my child or lost my patience when he was just doing his best, doing what he needed for his body (sensory-seeking, etc). It was hard to forgive myself, but this quote helps me to!

"It ain't what they call you, it's what you answer to." ~WC Fields Do you know how hard it is when everyone stares, making comments under their breath about how I can't control my child in public? You know what? They don't walk in my shoes. As long as I am doing my best, I must learn to shut off those thoughts that everyone is judging me and just be my best!

Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, and don't mess with Mr. In-Between ~J Mercer (I love that song!)

Whenever anyone has offended me, I try to raise my soul so high that the offense cannot reach it. ~Descartes

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. -Winston Churchill This is a great quote to remember before an IEP meeting ;)

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. ~M. Kathleen Casey

Family is just accident... they don't mean to get on your nerves. They don't even mean to be your family, they just are. ~Marsha Norman I like to remind my older daughter of this when she feels like her brother with Autism is getting on her nerves on purpose.

Do not teach your children never to be angry; teach them how to be angry. ~Lyman Abbott Children on the spectrum already struggle with social and emotional skills. The last thing we want to do is punish them for a normal emotion, or teach them to keep it inside.

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity. ~George Smith Patton

I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to. ~Author Unknown Can you relate to this one at all? I know I can!

"If I could snap my fingers and be nonautistic, I would not - because then I wouldn't be me. Autism is part of who I am." -Temple Grandin
I think it's imperative to try to support and lessen the struggles of our children while never trying to change their identity.

PRAISE. It's the magic word when you are dealing with Kids. Praise their actions-the ones you want to reinforce. Ignore the others if you can.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." Plato Just as others don't know what you are facing, you also do not know what their current reality is. So give everyone the benefit of the doubt ☺

"How we treat the child, the child will treat the world." Pam Leo

"Teach your kids to live their lives to the fullest by living yours the same way." ~Hugh DeBurgh Being a martyr doesn't add anything to your circle.

Mothers are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child. ~Sophia Loren

Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children. William Makepeace Thackeray

Our goal as parents is to celebrate and love our children and help them to become well-adjusted, productive, happy adults.

Children with Autism especially require a very balanced, peaceful, loving, authentic environment in order for them to thrive and flourish.

Do not put limits on the possibilities for your child.



Tips

I love setting up a living room campout with my children... the best things in life are free and simple!

"Some people find fault like there was a reward for it." Zig Ziglar Stop looking for what's wrong – in your IEP, in your parenting, in your child, in the doctors – celebrate what is RIGHT! What is wonderful!

It's 10:00... do you know where your children are? (and why are mine still up??) Children with Autism can sometimes have major sleep issues! Read about some practical solutions here.

After an evening of meetings, I will promptly unplug from all devices & give my children my undivided attention. Make sure you shut the smartphone down, close the laptop, and just PLAY with your kids sometimes! Frequently. As much as you can. Now. ☺

'Tis common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it. ~J Steinbeck It is easy to get frustrated and frazzled when you are sleep deprived. Take it from me! Sometimes we just need a good night's sleep and the rest works itself out.

An expectation is a resentment in waiting... Sometimes we get angry when we repeatedly expect something of our children that they simply aren't capable of.

Remember to tend to your needs first - you are of no service to others if you reach burnout. I always need to be reminded of this!

Autistic children do need structure but respond quite negatively to military-style discipline and strictness. Interaction matters.

Yelling at an Autistic child for something they can't help is like disciplining a dog 10 hours after he ate your favorite shoes.

Emotion cards are a great self-correcting tool to help your Asperger's child identify when they are spinning out of control.

Celebrating my children this weekend by giving them my time and attention. As parents, we forget that all our children really want is our attention, even though they ask for video games. A lot.

Parents of autistic children... ask a sibling to tell THEIR story and watch the compassion grow!

How is it that a grocery store trip with my Autistic son is an atrocious sensory overload, yet Laser Tag is totally therapeutic!? Odd? Or is it the weighted vest?

When your child starts to spin out of control, redirect them with a job to do. It will change their focus where simple discipline doesn't.

Nature's Path has a great line of Gluten-Free cereals in many kid-friendly flavors! Great for Autistic GFCF diets!

I just made the correlation that my autistic child acts out when the car stereo is loud. His sister still wants music... maybe silencing headphones are a good solution!

A lesson I continue to learn: I can't get angry at my Autistic child for lack of structure when I don't properly put it in place! If I don't make the rules or expectations clear, how can I expect them to be heard and understood?

Sometimes allowing extra time for my child with Autism to move at his own pace rather than rushing him eliminates meltdown.

Communicate expectations to your autistic child clearly. What we consider logical is not always perceived the same way.

Noticing that when you expect great behavior from your child rather than dreading the challenge, something shifts...they begin to soar!

Sometimes asking for a sibling's input on one of your child's autistic behaviors can dissolve jealousy in an instant.

Instead of losing patience with your Autistic child for loud noises/disruptions, allow him/her to go to a different room to do whatever is necessary.

A practical substitute for "squeezy" vests for your sensory-seeking child can sometimes be as simple as multiple layers of clothing.

If your Autistic child has "held it together" all day for school, let it be okay for them to go nuts and let it all out at home. Within pre-defined limits, of course ☺

More and more restaurants are offering Gluten-Free menu items now!

I find it extremely important to clarify general "cooling down" time vs. time out for a less than desired behavior with my son.

Autism typically signifies Left Brain dominance: conscious thought, logical analysis, outer awareness, language, mimicking, methods and rules.

Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between defiance and not understanding a command with your Autistic child. Start with basic questions and help them to self-identify what's really going on.

Does your Autistic child frequently forget to bring home jackets, lunchbox, etc. from school? Drives me nuts! Another parent suggested a laminated checklist to keep in his cubby for end-of-day transitioning.

Almond milk is getting more popular in stores now. More than one brand is making it, which means OPTIONS and competitive pricing! YAY!

I'm having a BLAST using old police and fire radio codes on walkie-talkies with my son - a perfect match for his love of memorizing numbers!

We tend to tell our children "You should know better" or "You should know why"; this doesn't work with Autism, in most cases they truly don't.

My son doesn't understand "quarter of", "in a little bit", and other vague phrases. He needs exact facts in conversation.

My child remembers all details and conversations impeccably. That kind of memory comes in handy when I meet someone new and forget their name... or what street to turn on when we're going somewhere!

Starting a sentence with 'How would YOU like it if...' when talking to your Autistic child doesn't work. Choose clear, concise words.

There are so many wonderful non-traditional Autism and Sensory Processing therapies available today to explore! Music, rhythm, martial arts, NLP, EFT, dog/horse...

People think everybody with autism knows that June 5, 1981, was a Friday. But this is a wide group, with so many different faces to it. S. O'Brien

For some kids with Autism, wheat and dairy products aren't properly digested and form peptides, producing opiate-like effects on the brain.

The sensory integration process happens automatically for most children, when it does not it can lead to behaviors that are misunderstood.

Sometimes it's smarter to just stop a bad habit rather than dissecting its root cause. All you have is the now.

Sometimes to do nothing is sufficient action. Be still. This is one tool I forget about when I'm amid a crisis attached to a huge decision. Sitting on the fence is no fun, but sometimes just getting quiet allows the answer or inspiration to come to me naturally.



Inspiration

"Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions."

~**Albert Einstein** What are your dreams? Are you living them? Working toward them? Do you encourage your children's truth, without telling them it's "ridiculous", "unrealistic", or "not stable enough"?

Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way you expect. Our special needs children are TRUE gifts and blessings! What unique things have they taught YOU?

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do."

~**Confucius** This is not an easy journey. We know this. But you are an amazing parent by simply persisting to support your child(ren).

"Chase down your passion like it's the last bus of the night." ~GB Addams

"I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet." ~Ghandi

Don't let what other people think stop you from doing what's best for you and your child. They don't live your life – you do.

Become a possibilitarian. ~Norman Vincent Peale

A smile is the light in the window of your face that tells people you're at home.

~**Author Unknown** Sometimes a friendly smile from a stranger when I'm struggling with something changes my world.

Treat everyday like the gift that it is... open it with anticipation and great expectation!

If you're gonna quit, quit complaining... if you're gonna give up, give up fear... if you're gonna doubt, doubt your limits.

When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on. ~Franklin D. Roosevelt

This is a great one to remember in my most frazzled moments.

The Principal of my son's school told me, "He's a good kid, he's just happy-go-lucky, out-the-box is all..." <- a great way to put it!

Love me when I least deserve it, because that's when I really need it. ~ Swedish Proverb

From my son's teacher regarding our plans to move: "Justin's loved by us all and has found a special place in our hearts. Thank you for allowing us this time with him." Isn't that the sweetest? It's so nice to see that perspective, vs. the "disruptive child that we can't handle" mentality of previous situations. Bravo!

**"Autism is as much a part of humanity as is the capacity to dream." --
Kathleen Seidel**

A mother's heart is special, it has the capacity to forgive, forget, deeply love and start anew.

"There's nothing like biting off more than you can chew, and then chewing anyway." Mark Burnett This is sometimes what it feels like to parent a child with special needs. But it is SO worth it!

A mother understands what a child does not say. ~Author Unknown

My son did his biography project on Satoshi Tajiri, Pokemon creator, because he has Asperger's like him ☺ Sweet

Justin: you're the best mom ever.

Me: Why do you think I'm the best mom ever?

Justin: Because you're MY mom. (could my heart possibly melt any more?)

"Love is giving someone your undivided attention." -Anonymous



Humor

"I like to take life one day at a time, but lately several days have attacked me at once." ~Unknown I know we've all been here sometimes!

In response to my tween daughter's meltdown today, I said, "Welcome to Hormonia, land of attitude and emotion. I am your ruler and queen." She didn't laugh.

My 7 year-old Autistic son proclaimed today, "I'm not a freak, just unique!" Out of the mouths of babes. YES!

My son just tried to pull a fast one - there's a puppy tooth under his pillow! What a shyster!

"Well, remember what you said, because in a day or two, I'll have a witty and blistering retort! You'll be devastated THEN!" ~Calvin & Hobbes Children with Autism don't always have quick wit... this quote really cracked me up!

When the child is quiet...time for panic. A little alarm goes off in a mommy's head when the boy has been quiet in another room too long ☺

Autistic children are so literal; seeing my FDNY shirt, my son asked, "Well what happened to *old* York??" :)

Applying logic and ultimatums to Autistic impulsive behavior is like trying to handle radioactive waste with an oven mitt. Sometimes they just do what they do.

Ever catch yourself still listening to the kids' CD long after you've dropped them off at daycare?

"Madness takes its toll. Please have exact change." ~Unknown

"Right now my life is just one learning experience after another. By the end of the week, I should be a genius." ~Jeanette Osias

My 7 year-old son just asked me to explain the Hindenburg tragedy to him. Less than a year later, he explained how chromosomes determine a baby's sex over dinner! They are little Einsteins, aren't they?

I actually said "Close the door, we don't live in a barn" to my son just now... Mom? Is that you?

Once I was so tired I actually stopped at the 'Stop Ahead' sign instead of the actual stop sign. Have you ever been like that?

I reached for the ice scraper this morning where I always keep it, but found in its place a corn dog on a stick. Huh? Boys!!

Children are unpredictable. You never know what inconsistency they're going to catch you in next. ~Franklin P. Jones This is especially true of kids on the Spectrum, they are so linear and literal!

I'll take things I don't want to hear from my son for \$200, Alex: "Mom, I need help getting that thing out of the toilet..."

I had the privilege of singing the banana-fana song all the way to school, using Pokemon after running out of Super Mario Brothers characters.

Meanwhile, my son figured out that if you turn on the vibrating toothbrush and lay it flat it turns circles as he chases it with the toothpaste!

Children with Autism don't understand sarcasm, but I always forget about literalism! Example: "Justin, you have the cutest button nose." "My nose isn't made of a button!"

"If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. Parents always catch the second person." Michael, age 10

Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 & 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years. ~Unknown

Funny... I tried the meditation "First picture your feet, relax them only, then feel just your legs, relax..." with my son to get him to feel tired. I forgot he can't feel his body in space! DOH!

My daughter requested a "refresh" button on the fridge so its contents would change each time she opens it ☺ How great would that be?

Autistic forecast for today: scattered brainstorm

Hmmm... found between the couch cushions: a plethora of DS games and loose Nerds. Ewww.

My daughter just told me I sounded like a Neopet getting punched in the gut when I bent down to retrieve a penny. Am I getting old?!?!?

Why can't there be a Wii game where the little hand actually dusts the front of your TV?

The quickest way for a parent to get a child's attention is to sit down and look comfortable. ~Lane Olinghouse

Apparently there is a huge vortex somewhere in the house that traps boys' socks & underwear only.

I told my son I had a bowl of organic macaroni and cheese with his name all over it. We opened it and he looked, asking, "Where's my name?"

The one thing children wear out faster than shoes is parents. ~John J. Plomp

I'm pretty certain I should've used a HAZMAT suit while disposing of my son's sneakers today. Whew! Boys!

I asked my son if he wanted to play Pinochle; mortified he exclaimed, "Why would I want to play a game where you pee on someone's knuckles?"



Perspective

If you break your neck, have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire, then you got a problem. Everything else is inconvenience. ~R Fulghum Sometimes it is so valuable to stop and say, "How important is it?"

Don't fight against something, rally for something you DO want! ~Maria Lesetz

Only those who attempt the absurd will achieve the impossible. I think it's in my basement...let me go upstairs and check. ~M.C. Escher I <3 this quote!

I'm finding that compassion for my son's every day experience is opening the doors to great behavior!

As frustrated as I get with my Autistic child for not listening, I can forget how frustrated he must be that no one understands him.

Sometimes I wish the world could see my son the same way that I do.

I find that my autistic child operates on his own timing - he simply doesn't subscribe to the sense of urgency I can put on things! This is a lesson!

It's great to be prepared, but sometimes expecting bad behavior from your child actually brings it on.

All the diseases and dysfunctions we face today and there is a prescription product to grow your eyelashes at night...REALLY?

I decided to get just as excited about Mondays as I do about Fridays... why not?

Have you considered that we're the ones processing information slowly, and that our special needs children are way ahead of us? Just a thought!

Be careful how you interpret the world: It is like that. ~Erich Heller Our perspective and our thoughts truly shape our reality... choose good ones!

I often wonder - why do daycare centers essentially shriek in terror as I mention my son is high-functioning Autistic? He's a gifted delight doing his best!

"Not everything that steps out of line, and thus 'abnormal,' must necessarily be 'inferior.'" - Hans Asperger

When a child hearkens to the beat of a different drum, perhaps he's keeping time to songs of Angels that we simply cannot hear. ~Long-Kirkpatrick

"...high-functioning means your deficits are ignored, low-functioning means your assets are ignored." - L. Tisoncik

"Normal is just a setting on a dryer." -Autism forum message board

We're all a little weird; when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up, fall in mutual weirdness and call it love. -Unknown

I find it so strange that my child doesn't feel cold. I'm jealous as I shiver, insisting he put on a Northern Exposure-type parka!

I feel as if I'm living in a parallelogram universe at the moment...

Our Autistic children have something to teach us, not necessarily learn from us.

We tend to spend too much time teaching our children how NOT to be disapproved of rather than how to be in alignment with their desires.

Autistic children are more content than almost anyone you meet, unless you are trying to get them to be different than they are. -Abraham

There's just a one-letter difference between artistic and Autistic :)

I was always out of tune, or so I thought, now realize simply a different frequency - Alyson Bradle

I consider that children and adults with Aspergers Syndrome have a different, not defective, way of thinking. -Tony Attwood

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be. ~Thomas Kempis

I alphabetized my value club card thingies on my keychain (Blockbuster, Food City, Kroger, etc) OY! Sometimes our quirks are just that - quirks :)

Someone with Asperger's really is like you, just more extreme. -Dr Winnie Dunn

God bless the day I realized my boy wasn't just being a wise@ss and he really didn't get it! What a relief to learn he processes information very differently than I thought he did. It gave me something to build on.

Bill Gates, Alfred Hitchcock, Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Jim Henson, Charles Schulz, Michaelangelo, Mozart, George Orwell << famous peeps with Asperger's

The more I accept my son (and myself) for who we are - the more we both grow.

I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious. ~Albert Einstein

A different thought: If we shame the children with labels or medicate them into submission, are we undermining a heaven-sent gift?

**The trouble with learning to parent on the job is that your child is the teacher.
~Robert Brault**

"He told me that his teachers reported he was mentally slow, unsociable, and adrift forever in his foolish dreams."-Hans Einstein, son of Albert Einstein

Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered - either by themselves or by others. ~Mark Twain

Maybe Autistic children are showing up to give their families the opportunity to learn to get happy no matter what. -Abraham

Children respond to a natural human instinct to explore and define the world... this is an instinctual drive for the human species.

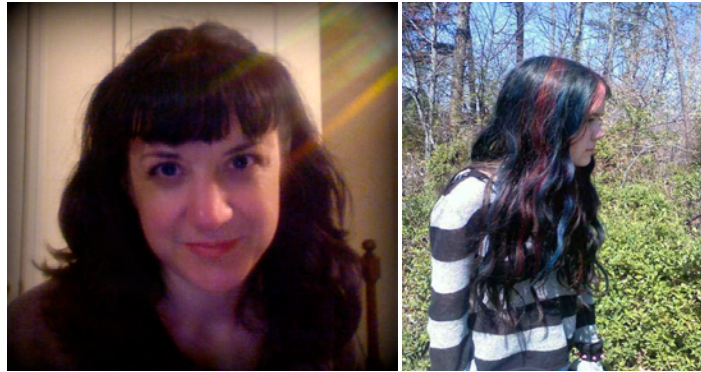
I am so glad we stopped all of our rigid reprogramming of our kids and started living this sweet life as it is.

© 2010 by Debi Taylor

Photos edited and enhanced by **Dorian Smith**

All rights reserved. No portion of this manual may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical—including fax, photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system—without the written permission of the author, except as granted under the following conditions:

- The purchaser may photocopy pages for personal use.
- A reviewer may quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in a magazine or newspaper, with written approval from the author prior to publishing.



Spirit Of Autism offers practical tips, resources, tools and strategies to teach you how to help your child be more calm and focused so they can have an easier time at home and in school.

Debi Taylor is an Autism Specialist with over 3,500 hours of research and implementation of real-life tools and solutions for children and families affected by Autism. Through her experience and dedication to her own child, she created a transformational system for children on the Autism Spectrum that covers fitness & nutrition, tips and tools for identifying sensory vs. behavior, coping strategies, calming techniques, Autism safety, emotional support for parents and more.

She is also a Special Needs Counselor for Emergency Responders. She founded Spirit Of Autism to educate and empower families and public safety sectors about Autism. She is grateful for her journey with her own Autistic child, which inspired her to keep searching for ways to make a global difference with healing and support for the increasing number of children on the Autism Spectrum.