

JOHN PENDAL: Coaching For People Who Feel Like Outsiders

Autistic Women's and Nonbinary Voices

When I found out I was autistic I didn't really believe it for several years. I thought that to be genuinely autistic you either had to be either winning Nobel prizes or unable to speak – and if you were somewhere in the middle with a house, a partner and a job – did that really count?

I grew in self-acceptance when I found people on social media and in the real world who were speaking openly about being autistic and were just like me.

Autistic women and nonbinary folk are often overlooked or not represented. That might be because much of the research into autism has been done on men, and there is even a theory that autism is "*an extreme male brain*". Another reason put forward is that there is more pressure on girls to be social, and so they learn to mask more completely to fit in, whereas it can be more acceptable for (some) boys to be allowed to be solitary or exhibit autistic behaviour.

I think that's why it's important to promote the following voices, in case you find someone "*just like you*". Also I've enjoyed a lot of the following recommendations because they are awesome, talented people and deserve to be heard.

I appreciate there's a huge risk that I could be accused of mansplaining with this blog post, so let me clarify that the following suggestions have come from autistic women and nonbinary people in my life and clients that I've been lucky to work with.

ORGANISATIONS

The Autistic Girls Network – a registered charity offering support and information, with a website at <https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/> and Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/198220980748417/>

<https://www.johnpendal.com>

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AUDIO

Science journalist Sue Nelson shares her personal journey in an audio documentary *Inside an Autistic Mind*. Available in the UK on BBC Sounds:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct5r81>

The Late Discovered Club is a podcast that gives late discovered autistic women and marginalized genders a voice: <https://www.podpage.com/the-late-discovered-club/>

The Neurodivergent Woman Podcast is hosted by clinical psychologist Monique Mitchelson and clinical neuropsychologist Dr Michelle Livock:

<https://www.ndwomanpod.com/>

The Yellow Ladybugs Podcast explores the world of autistic girls, women and gender diverse individuals, supporting you through those challenging moments:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/5VrHmhmRZlaWteWAVe8f7y>

The Loudest Girl in the World podcast is Lauren Ober's story of figuring herself out as a late diagnosed autistic and how it answered so many questions she's had:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/3jYnWGbwdwJzdg8gdu3loz>

The Squarepeg Podcast by Amy Richards is specifically for autistic women and nonbinary people: <https://squarepeg.community/podcast/>

VIDEO

Hannah Gadsby has several comedy specials on Netflix, has published a memoir and also tours live shows (<https://hannahgadsby.com.au/>). Hannah is genderqueer and uses they/ them pronouns, and talks about being autistic in their shows.

YouTuber YoSamdySam has over 100 videos on their YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@YoSamdySam/> and also written *So you think you're autistic: A workbook for the confused person who's just trying to figure things out*.

All About Women is a one hour video from the Sydney Royal Opera House, where Amy Thunig interviews Chloe Hayden, Grace Tame & Jac den Houting:

<https://stream.sydneyoperahouse.com/videos/actually-autistic-all-about-women-2023>

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WORDS AND PHOTOS

Scottish comedian and Taskmaster contestant Fern Brady has published their autobiography *Strong Female Character*.

Autism in Heels: The Untold Story of a Female Life on the Spectrum by Jennifer Cooke O'Toole is a bestselling memoir.

Odd Girl Out: An Autistic Woman in a Neurotypical World by Laura James.

But you don't look autistic at all by Bianca Toeps.

Author Jackie Schuld has a series of written interviews with late-identified autistic folk at <https://medium.com/@jackieschuld/list/late-identified-autistic-interviews-f6214bb999ce>

Autistic advocate Sarah O'Brien has written a book for young people: *So, I'm Autistic: An Introduction to Autism for Young Adults and Late Teens*.

Photographer Rosie Barnes created a collection of portraits of autistic women called *No You're Not*. You can see the collection of photos and interviews with the subjects at <https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/Yd8L-hAAAIAXFxqa>

Women Beyond the Box has created lists of the 50 Influential Neurodivergent Women in 2019, 2022 and 2023. You can see the latest list at <https://www.womenbeyondthebox.com/50-influencers-2023/>

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions you'd like to add.

Best wishes,

John Pendal

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