

Understanding Neurotypicals - for the Autistic

*A summarization and
distilling of the Mega-thread
"The Autism Social Rule
Book":*

[https://wrongplanet.net/forums/
viewtopic.php?f=3&t=131296](https://wrongplanet.net/forums/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=131296)

**General principle: fake a
level of participation in
group behaviours**

Examples:

- Ordering an unusual meal or drink in a restaurant can be taken by neurotypicals as a statement, an attempt to get attention, or as a way to show up others for not being adventurous.
- Not joining in, even in the most cursory way, with a bitching session at work could mark you out as separate from the group or be perceived as you thinking you are 'better' than the venting neurotypicals.
- Doing something alone, or admitting to pursuing

solitary hobbies, can be seen as unsavoury to neurotypicals or as marking you out as some kind of oddball.

Analysis:

Neurotypicals seem to see the most inane coded meaning in all gestures and actions. **If you go against the group dynamic or consensus, they will project all kind of coded meaning onto this behaviour that would never naturally occur to an autistic person.**

They seem to find an almost religious comfort in being part of

a group dynamic and an agreed group decision making structure. Autistics don't understand this because we have never lived in a world designed for us, and we have had to build strong independent identity and thinking skills simply to navigate this.

Action:

What I have learnt to do is stay quiet in most group situations and analyse some of the repeated behaviours and traits that come up in the group setting. I then attempt 'low risk' interactions with the group, such as ordering a similar drink as everyone else, or

asking simple questions about topics that seem to be of interest to the group.

Neurotypicals will value a cynical, surface level of participation in their group dynamic far more than a genuine interaction that threatens or contradicts the group. Even if they might say otherwise, they tend to value conformity and reflection more than they value authenticity.

Once you get to know people better and can identify trusted figures with a more open mindset, you may choose to unwind a little in certain group settings. For example, having drinks with a

handful of vetted colleagues who have shown themselves to be open minded and non judgmental. Do this with caution and be prepared to default back to 'safe mode' if needed.

To assess a social situation, one needs to pick up on as many clues as possible and swiftly piece them together. The final deduction is often greater than the sum of its parts.

In a group of 4 people don't talk more than 25% of the time, in a

group of 5 people don't talk more than 20% of the time

Look at it like a modem's handshake (when a modem dials a server they exchange bleeps which tell them what method and speed each is using to communicate). It's basically just for setting the protocol for communication between humans. All that "small talk" stuff is mostly about that. General small talk could also be called "finding a common ground" and "creating a common ground".

When viewed from that angle the canned responses stop being stupid. You are checking each

other for standard responses, finding small things in attitude, pronunciation etc. That's why the answer itself doesn't really matter. It generally takes humans half a sentence to set up decoding for another person's speech patterns, the empty "how are you?" "Pretty good, weird weather" phrases allow for that.

When you meet a person again recall what happened in the last meeting or last few meetings. For us everytime we meet a person its a new start. Whenever a NT see other person the history between them open like ctrl-H [*opens the History*]. So be mindful of the fact that your future correspondent

with a person depends upon your past one. This is very helpful to understand why a person sometime behaves "strangely". Remember everyday is not a new day.

Ask people about their interests instead of telling them about yours. This will make them feel more important than they are, and they will end up doing big favors for you in the long run.

No one cares about you. They care about themselves. How does having contact with you benefit

them? If you want to connect with them, you need to focus on them.

Keep in mind that a benefit may be more complex than just money or attention. Charity, for example, also have some kind of hidden selfish reason. ("It makes me feel good", etc.)

If you have something to offer (art, singing, storywriting, helping out, etc) don't give it out too freely or people will just take advantage of you.

Hold your assets back and give them out sparingly and have people wanting more. Don't hold back too much either or they will

give up on you. Getting the balance right takes practice.

Don't argue to prove a point unless you know the person well enough. You'll come across as "narrow minded" or "stubborn" rather than the intelligent debater you want to look like

Sometimes a pause indicates an opening. Other times, it's just people collecting their thoughts. If someone pauses, wait a few seconds before speaking. Likewise, don't pause and wait for a reaction if you aren't finished talking!

I've found that, if I can remember these three rules during a conversation, I tend to do pretty well. At least, if my goal is getting the other person to like me.

1. Talk less than the other person.
2. When you do talk, ask lots of questions and pay lots of compliments.
3. *When in doubt, keep quiet.*

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- Don't show weakness or you will be eaten alive. Pretend to understand even if you don't, and don't

ever think you do, because you don't.

- Don't trust anyone with anything that can be used against you if they have not proven their trustworthiness, and if they have, be wary of their intentions.
- If you start to feel frustrated, remove yourself from the situation, and deal with the consequences later.
- If somebody is wrong, then don't correct them. If the matter is important, use small words and try to lead them to the solution so

they think that they found it.

- Try to say things in as few words as possible, using small words, so people don't misunderstand you, or read something into what you're saying.
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'When someone says something that is incorrect information, think before correcting them. If it is a person you like and know well, don't correct them or do it very gently.'

NTs value social connection not information, that has tripped me up a million times and ended friendships

Do not try to find logic in social rules. Social rules are the code of community. In social situations, all that matters is that you pay attention to how the other person signals the turn of a conversation and you have to adapt to it. Only bring up a new idea when the other person has finished his or her thought. Try not to bring up thoughts irrelevant to the conversation as a whole.

Conversation is about call and response. *You have to interact with the other person.*

Remember - those who are the norm get away with picking on

those who are different. Those who are different are not supposed to pick on the norm but have to adapt to it. Yes, it makes life bloody impossible.

Always remember that the shared illusion the people at your workplace want to hold about who they are as a company and how they want to be perceived (e.g., honest, helpful, fighting for justice, whatever) is far more important than actually achieving that. In fact while they will only make token efforts at being honest/whatever, they will despise you if you try to help make their illusion a reality.

Every time you forget this, you will get burned one way or another. It's better to just ignore the difference, do your job, and go home to reality.

The “three gates”: I was told this was an old Arabic saying and I like it a lot. "Everything you say must pass through three gates. Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?" Don't lie. If it's true but not necessary, wait until it is. I have a corollary to this, that saying up-building things is always "necessary." It's too easy to be overly restrictive with the necessary criteria and never speak. If it's true and necessary

but not kind, find a way to say it kindly (it's hard!).

Yes, the autistic brain simply isn't wired for conformity.

While others may have thought that I was "the mentally ill one" for so long, if you examine it objectively, it's like NTs have collective schizophrenia.

Seeing insults or defiance or whatever that simply isn't there. Reading into somebody innocently missing a social rule or cue as that person acting princely when they had no such intent let alone awareness.

I also don't like how this unspoken group norm behaviour even pervades across low-context cultures. If you've read up on Gert Hofstede's high vs low context cultures and power distance, you'll know what I'm talking about.

These actions work in the way that they to a large extent keep you out of trouble with people. But what's the point, really, to take part in social activities and socialize with people under these conditions? It's more like you are an actor in a play or being an under-cover agent infiltrating a criminal group pretending to be one of them. What do you

physiologically or mentally get out of it?

Further reading: “Survival guide for people living with Asperger's syndrome” by Marc Segar:
<https://autism-help.org/aspergers-guide-intro.htm>