

## The Keys to Autism Self-Acceptance

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In a world that often values conformity, embracing who you are especially as an autistic person can feel like a radical act. But self-acceptance is not just possible; it's essential. It's a journey that begins with understanding your worth, celebrating your differences, and letting go of the idea that you need to be "fixed."

My journey started at age five with a diagnosis but little support. Autism was barely understood then, and services were limited. I struggled in school, misunderstood by teachers and bullied by peers. For years, I asked myself, "Why was I born like this?"

Things began to change when I started writing my book. Putting my story into words helped me realize that autism wasn't just a diagnosis it was my identity. That realization opened the door to acceptance. I began sharing my story publicly, and during one talk at UC Berkeley, a student confided in me: "No one knows I'm autistic, but you helped me step out of my comfort zone." That moment affirmed that sharing my story was more than healing it was a way to help others.

God guided me through the pain and into purpose. Today, I speak to inspire other autistics, parents, and allies to embrace self-acceptance and hope. But this journey isn't easy. It requires strength, resilience, and support.

Here are six common myths about autism self-acceptance that need to be challenged:

1. It's just about accepting your diagnosis. True self-acceptance is about valuing yourself as a whole person not just tolerating your label.
2. Only autistic people need it. Family, friends, educators, and professionals all benefit from understanding and accepting autistic individuals.
3. It's a one-time achievement. Self-acceptance is ongoing. It's a process of growth, not a finish line.
4. It only matters on a personal level. Self-acceptance fuels social change reducing stigma and promoting inclusion.
5. You must hide your traits to be accepted. The goal isn't to mask who we are it's to celebrate our uniqueness.
6. It's a Western concept. Self-acceptance is a universal human need, transcending culture.

To thrive as autistic individuals, we must reject the notion that we are broken. We're not. We are wonderfully different, deeply capable, and uniquely insightful. But to believe this, we must learn to treat ourselves with the same compassion we'd offer a friend. We must build communities where we are truly seen, valued, and supported.

Here are ten keys that helped me on my path to self-acceptance:

- **Educate yourself**  
Learn about autism from books, workshops, and other autistic voices.
- **Reflect**  
Know your strengths and limitations. Both are valid.
- **Find your people**  
Surround yourself with those who support and uplift you.
- **Prioritize self-care**  
Mental, emotional, and physical wellness matter.
- **Set boundaries**  
Protect your energy and well-being.
- **Celebrate your differences**  
Your quirks and passions are gifts, not flaws.
- **Seek therapy if needed**  
A neurodiversity-affirming therapist can be life-changing.
- **Focus on progress**  
Growth is not linear. Celebrate every step.
- **Play to your strengths**  
Build your confidence by doing what you're great at.
- **Be patient**  
Self-acceptance takes time and that's okay.

To my fellow autistics, know this: You are worthy. You are enough. And you have the power to change the world just by being yourself. Autism isn't a weakness it's a different way of being, one that offers fresh insight, creativity, and resilience.

Let us be proud. Let's lift one another up. Let us break barriers, defy stereotypes, and build a future where neurodiversity is not just accepted but celebrated. And always remember: The key to self-acceptance isn't changing who you are. It's embracing it.

I leave you with a quote I wrote:

**"We are like a flower waiting to bloom into something beautiful. When it rains, that essence of life gives us hope that we will blossom at the right time."**

Thank you for reading. Let's bloom together.

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