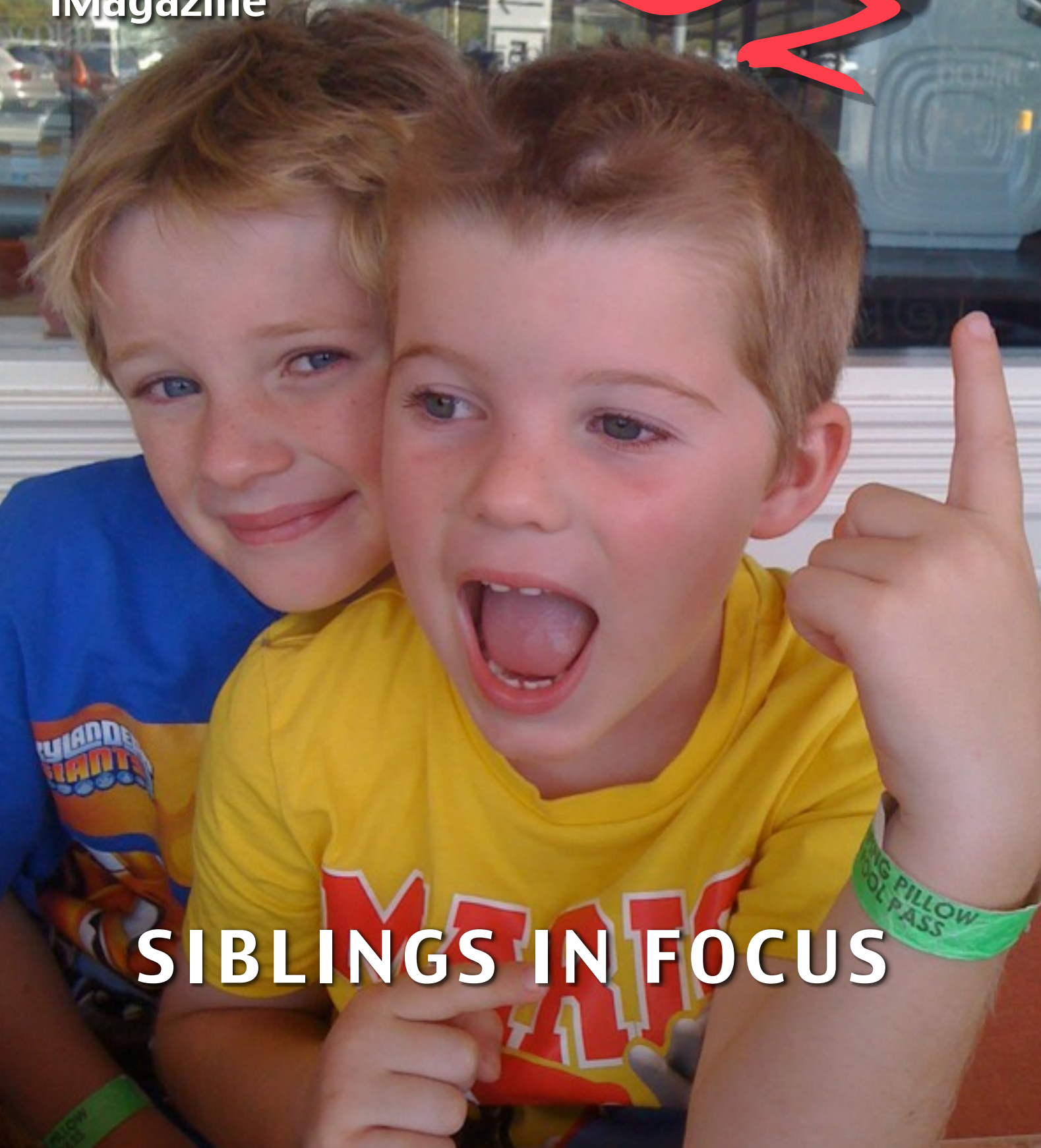


# autism

iMagazine



## SIBLINGS IN FOCUS

# wrong planet

with Malcolm Mayfield

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Malcolm Mayfield is a certified practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a qualified presenter and trainer, and co-author and Australian distributor of the AAPC book “The Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Navigating the Social Landscape of Employment.”

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**What happens to your child once they turn 18? This is the question troubling many families. autism Oz hopes to answer some of your concerns in our new section 18 PLUS with Malcolm Mayfield.**

There is a faction within the autistic community that refers to their diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome or autism as “wrong planet syndrome”.

The social rules and conventions are so complex and, in some minds, unnecessary, that those of us on the autism spectrum must have been stranded or imprisoned on the wrong planet.

The “wrong planet” does provide an interesting metaphor regarding the differences between neurotypical and autistic mindsets.

On one side there is Planet Neurotypical, a world full of noise, strong odours, bright flashing lights and an overpowering addiction to emotional stimulation. Anything can happen on Planet Neurotypical for it is a world of change, excitement and indulgence.

On the other side is Planet Autism, divided evenly into countless number of districts. Some districts are noisy and others are so quiet that you can hear the sound of your own beating heart. Some are bright and others are blanketed in twilight. Some are filled with strong odours and others are devoid of scent.



## “The truth is that we are all on the same planet”

Each of these districts, of which there are many more than those mentioned, are isolated by intricate shields that prevent the influence of the other districts from leaching in.

You know what you are going to get on Planet Autism. It is safe, predictable and ordered. However, to the neurotypical mind, it is the most boring and confusing place in the universe. Whereas to the autistic mind, Planet Neurotypical is a scary, overwhelming, anxiety inducing place that should only be experienced in small doses if it has to be experienced at all.

The truth is that we are all on the same planet called Earth, a world with diverse and rich cultures and beliefs. However there is one key similarity at the core of all cultures; regardless of our skin colour, belief systems or neurobiology, we are all of the human species.

That humanity presents the solution to bridging the gap of understanding between the neurotypical and autistic worlds; it provides a baseline for establishing effective communication.

Earth is becoming a global community, to the delight of some and the chagrin of others. This globalisation was only made possible by recognising that there were barriers to effective communication and then finding ways to overcome those barriers.

When someone is speaking a different language, it is very easy to identify that extra effort needs to be undertaken to ensure that any dialogue is received and understood clearly.

Autism is a different language to that used in the neurotypical world.

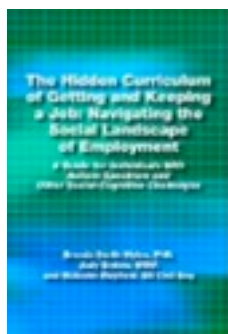
We may all speak the same dialect, but we do not speak the same 'language'. This is very evident by considering the differences in processing of information.

How then do we create a successful, global community where autistics and neurotypicals can work and live together in harmony? By building a bridge of respect, acceptance and openness. If you are neurotypical and want to cross the bridge onto Planet Autism, then it is wise to respect the cultures and conventions of the districts being visited. The same applies for any autistic crossing the bridge to the neurotypical world.

Furthermore, visiting 'dignitaries' are afforded certain privileges because it is understood that they are out of the comfort zone of their own culture. Therefore accommodations are made on either side to make visitors comfortable and welcome. This creates an environment conducive to open and effective communication. This creates success.

How can you be successful as an autistic adult in a neurotypical world? By being an autistic adult who has learnt to communicate effectively with his neurotypical counterparts and by being open to teach others how to communicate autistically.

Click on book picture to order



Let's stop judging and blaming each other for getting it wrong and find ways to bridge the gap between worlds. Are you willing to step onto that bridge in the spirit of meeting the other side halfway? That is the first step in opening humanity up into a new era of cooperation, success and prosperity. Instead of being afraid of autistics or neurotypicals – embrace them.

**You might just find that both sides have a lot to offer each other and it might even make this world more harmonious and successful as a result.**

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**Malcolm Mayfield is co-author of "The Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Navigating the Social Landscape of Employment."**