



autism

iMagazine



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Expanding your social horizons

with **Malcolm Mayfield**

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.”



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 18 PLUS Section with Malcolm Mayfield.

I found this article very difficult to write. Why? Because as an Aspie, I have never fully understood the drive toward social behavior. However, I do understand through observation and experience that social interaction is a vital ingredient for success.

From my point of view there were two main types of social interaction. The first is the need to talk about inane topics such as fashion trends, the royal family and sports achievements. The second is the transfer of meaningful information with the intention of educating and evolving the masses.

Would it surprise you to know that both interactions actually have the same intention?

That intention is the exchange of information. You need only look at the internet to realise that information is power. He who has access to the most information is idolised and worshiped by the masses. Unfortunately, in reality land, the whole concept is one massive illusion. You may get the attention and adulation of the masses for a brief moment, but very soon their attention will move to the next interesting thing and you will be forgotten; cast adrift in the vastness of yesterday.

"to boldly go where no one has gone before"



So why be social? What is the point of it?

Firstly, unless you are a hermit and thrive on the hermit way of life, we live in a society (a derivative of social) that has created a co-dependency culture for survival. We rely on supermarkets for food and supplies, governments for services, parents for support, roads for travel, houses for shelter, etcetera ad infinitum. In fact, even hermits rely on others to bring them food – just ask any hermit, if you can find him.

So being social is about survival. Stone Age tribes learnt this by observing animals thriving through safety in numbers. But surviving just for the sake of it is not living. In fact it is quite boring. We humans have a drive to succeed, to boldly go where no one has gone before. Cue Star Trek music ... now!

We achieve success through learning from our own mistakes. But, why learn from our own mistakes when we can learn from the mistakes of others. Yeah! It is a safe, somewhat fun way to learn. This is exactly why news and current affairs media is so successful; we get to learn from the screw-ups of other people. How cool is that?

Social media and so-called reality television are likewise popular because they are a feeding frenzy of information about the human condition. Unfortunately they are a massive distortion of reality because they replace truth with the perception of the truth according to Sue, or Jack, or Bjork. They are no more real than the monkey on my back that has a penchant for yodeling.

We learn as individuals, but we learn more as a group; from each other, through each other and because of each other. We demonstrate new ways to success and we see all around us new ways to succeed. Even so-called failures can show us the way to greater success, whether they be our own failures or someone else's.

Become the autistic scientist. Observe the behaviour of your fellow human; get in amongst them and practice the human condition. I got to where I am today by doing exactly that and I will create even greater success around me and inspire others to better, brighter and greater lives by continuing to involve myself in this social world.

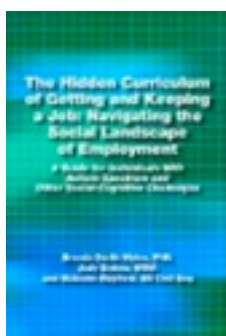
Expand your social horizons. If you want to learn more about your autism or Aspergers, join autistic social groups. Yes, they exist. If they are not in your area, then create your own social group. Learn to communicate with your fellow human and allow them to learn to communicate with you.

After all, that is what being social is all about; learning, experience and success.



Malcolm Mayfield
 Managing Director
 Autism STAR Pty Ltd
www.autism-star.com
 Adelaide, Australia

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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.”**

Got a question or issue you'd like
 Malcolm to address in 18+?
 Then please send us an email to
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