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January 31, 2023

No advice is given herein.

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BORN DIVERGENT

Neurological anomalies set me apart, even as a baby screaming above all others in the maternity ward. A man standing next to my father commented dryly, 'That's an ornery one.'

Dad thought, 'That's my son!'

Dad wrote this in response to my letter asking if he had memories of anything unusual about my birth, to help me understand the 'highly sensitive hearing' which was so harshly impacting my life and those around me.

In the culture of the 50s, many fathers believed that spanking their misbehaving child was an educational duty of a responsible parent. The flashback into the memories of spanking his loudly screaming baby boy wasn't easy on him.

I could feel his regret and shame between the lines. While writing this, I learned that people born with Asperger's syndrome commonly screamed as infants.

Recent studies confirm that misophonic brains are triggered to dysregulation by intense associations with past recollections of traumatic encounters. So it seems possible that a screaming newborn with Asperger's could develop misophonia from being traumatized by being spanked as a baby.

Only years later did society have words for what I experienced. For most of those years I felt alone in my tormented experience of life. It wasn't until my sixties that I heard of misophonia, a term meaning hatred of sounds. It's actually an automatic revulsive reaction to selective sounds, much deeper than hearing sensitivity, which affects about 20% of the population to some degree. Mine has been extreme, and triggers include visual as well as audio stimuli.

My first conscious memory of such dysregulation is from age five, cringing at the dinner table with my family. A little later, my dysregulation embarrassed my parents when we were dinner guests and outrage burst out of me to our hosts, 'you eat like pigs!' There were many such incidents in our long-enduring family.

When I was twelve, my nineteen year old brother died when the car he was driving went off a Wyoming mountain road. The family had just visited him at his work camp, and on our return home was tent camping when in the middle of the night a ranger informed my parents of his death. Thereafter, every nine years there was either a death in the family or another major trauma, six in total to date.

At the turn from pre-teen to teen, a fierce anger was developing in me towards my dad and society. It centered around Man's treatment of animals as objects and possessions, and his behaviors towards his fellow man. On a family outing, when Dad as driver hit a rabbit, I wanted him to go back to help it. When he didn't, I called him a murderer. My inner pain came out in

many asocial ways. A paper I wrote in eighth grade school titled 'Man' disturbed the adults to the point of sending me alone into the wilderness at age fifteen, as intended therapy. That story is written as 'River of No Return.'

Emotions continued to rage in me, but were becoming more buried as I explored eastern religions and metaphysics. My seeking to understand the 'hearing sensitivity' (because that was all I could put into words), and other abnormalities, continued. Well into my forties I was still trying to connect the dots and make sense of my life.

In some ways my childhood and teen years seemed rather normal, although already my life gravitated towards being an outsider. I wasn't invited to birthday parties, was the last to be picked for school sports, in winter skied the mountain slopes alone, and otherwise lived in my own world though not always by choice. Much later I learned that living in their own world is a common characteristic of people with Asperger's, also called Autism Spectrum Disorder Level One. For most of my life very little was known or discussed about misophonia, Asperger's or mental health in a holistic way.

Somewhat ironically, as an adult I was a therapeutic houseparent with my wife to a young man in Maine with much more acute autism than me. Professionally, it's differentiated as high and low functioning ASD. Years after that, we were houseparents to at-risk teenaged boys in the Bay area for an organization of therapists and psychiatrists. One of the boys had Asperger's but it was even later that I recognized traits in common and years more before accepting the limitations of my misophonia and Asperger's brain. It's better than not understanding why I am as I am.

Looking back across seventy years, certain threads can be seen running through, and the picture became clearer. I could now understand why, even with a deep desire to belong, I'd become in significant ways a loner. Personal loss also marked my journey, intertwined with the Asperger's own world, unique ways of interpreting experiences, and stages of whole human evolution.

During this period I did some serious soul searching, realized how my belief system had deluded me, and sought to live more authentically. It led to crossing the country in 2000, and starting to remake my life.

In Ashland, Oregon, I met a German woman with a brave heart who'd come to the States guided by spirit and intuition. She and I began traveling — first for doing energy healing work together, then to the remote River of No Return wilderness in Idaho (where as a fifteen year old I was exiled to hike the river trails for a summer with my dog Kiche.) From there we accepted life assignments in many places.

The greatest challenge of my life is appearing towards the end of it, as my physical force wanes and the characteristics of Asperger's become more pronounced. Accumulated pain and inhibited emotional connectivity strains relationships. However, it is balanced by my ever-expanding self-awareness, deepened acceptance of what is, and dedicated application of the tools I've developed.

For example, my life partner always has a deep place of belonging with me, in my heart. But

that has not always been evident due to my neurological limitations which also developed into unsupportive coping mechanisms and behavior patterns. Seeing the limitations of my neurology gives me a choice to face and deal with them more openly, honestly and consciously.

My brain processes some things fast and some slow, especially with regard to our neurodivergent relationship. It's been a slow process of gaining understanding, acceptance and integration about our situation — hers, mine and ours. The characteristics of Asperger's and misophonia appear prominently in our interactions.

I have to let go of approaching this mentally and remind myself, when her words feel against me, that it's not her but her pain talking — and verbalizing is one of her ways of healing. This doesn't excuse my behaviors or make me less accountable.

My own deeply felt connection with the eternal flame, the Source I am, whilst in the body, is my greatest strength. The neuro-me, the way I meet the world, adjusts itself to maintain harmony.

The aphorism of the ancient Greeks of 'Know Thyself' can be taken further, to find and feel the center of being within and maintain it as a constant sun in the midst of all trials and tests.

In one stage of my life, knowing God and the highest truth was my primary focus. In another, gaining knowledge. In another, a hunger for diverse and out-of-the-box experiences motivated me. Now, inner peace strong enough to withstand all daily storms is pre-eminent.

Some spiritual or esoteric teachers are particularly articulate and do convey beneficial information or helpful pointers. But it always goes only so far, and eventually the usefulness fades. Any steps which carry me forward on my journey are a result of dynamic interactions between external stimuli and my internal processing. So I'm coming more into the simplicity of trusting the inner compass to return me to the Present Moment and a Peaceful Mind.

Put another way, my current maxim is 'Embody Peace.' This means that when triggered, and what apparently is outside me cannot be changed, I work on adjusting myself by such things as inner surrender and letting go of control or needing it to be a certain way. It's an ongoing process which evolves with me.

Calmness is one thing, stillness another, when measured as brain signals. Inner peace is something else entirely when measured by one's reaction or response to triggering stimuli. One who is truly peaceful (not just trained, conditioned or masked to appear so) in the midst of the most trying circumstances has embodied peace. The anchor of such a one is constant felt connection with the eternal flame, the Source I am.


Intellectual peace is empty and meaningless, social peace superficial, and peace activism a contradiction of terms (fighting for peace). Embodied peace, however, is the single thing most needed by humanity to advance, as whole human beings.

Creating prose, poetry, short stories, webpages and blog posts has been my main expression outlet, a journal of my journey. Everything the reader reads now is expanded upon in more depth on the Whole Human website.

In my writing, higher and lower are meant not in a hierarchical sense of superior and inferior, better or worse. Rather, higher is more unitive with the ground of Being, and lower is more separated from the Source I am. Nothing can actually be separated from Source, but in this realm it is apparently so. These are levels of human awareness and experience within the universal field of consciousness.

Amidst all the darkness of the world, there are beacons of light shining now and into future generations. Among those, are decentralized blockchain technologies with a promise of self-governance. When community members (such as of the Cardano ecosystem) are committed to their own inner work, self-governance can be more harmonious.

Sometimes the brain is easily triggered to be in un-peace, and needs to be guided to return to peace. For this, there are tools such as the mantra/invocation I wrote. 'Eternal Flame' is read to me each morning by Voice Dream Reader, a natural voice synthesizer App (enabling me or anyone else to revise the text as needed) while the candlelight of this daily meditation burns by metaphor and faith with the eternal flame I am. It's not a fast fix, but a deep process which can see steady progress while building muscles of tolerance, resilience, and adaptability.

Another tool is ENDgame™, disguised as a solitary game of dice — which I'm developing for experiencing constant felt connection with the inner compass  that guides from a more complete perspective. There are no rules or instructions, only tools, guidelines and suggestions to start, as it's meant for each player to follow their own inner voice and for the game to evolve.

E.N.D. stands for Elemental Number Divination — and ENDgame™ works with the symbolic language of the elements, chakras and numbers (and their correspondences) in a way designed to bring balance, harmony, stability, and communion with the eternal flame, the Source I am. Each player can substitute with their own preferred words. For more about this, visit the Whole Human website:

WHOLE HUMAN WEBSITE

<https://www.wholehuman.emanatepresence.com/>