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Pike and Attwoods' "Neurodiverse relationships: Autistic and neurotypical partners share their experiences" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Pike, J., & Attwood, T. (2019). *Neurodiverse relationships: Autistic and neurotypical partners share their experiences*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 216 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 9781787750289

Various accounts are given by heterosexual couples regarding different issues they struggle with due to one partner having Asperger's syndrome (AS), while the other is considered neurotypical (NT). Asperger's syndrome is used to explain a highly functioning autistic person, although the term is no longer used when diagnosing someone. Each chapter focuses on the most common challenges that may be encountered in an AS/NT relationship, including anxiety, change, communication, diagnosis, empathy, employment, family occasions, finances, intimacy, meltdowns, parenting, and socializing. Each of these issues is tackled by the experience of a different couple, where the male is the one on the autistic spectrum.

Due to providing both perspectives of autistic and neurotypical partners, this book proves unique to others in this way. It could be encouraging to those facing similar problems in a neurodiverse relationship, since all of these couples have managed to stay together. The authors hope it will provide support to neurodiverse couples who are finding it difficult to understand each other.

The authors include Joanna Pike who founded Different Together CIC, a support network in the United Kingdom for neurotypical adults in relationships with partners on the autistic spectrum. Dr. Tony Attwood is a clinical psychologist and autism expert who provides commentary after each account given along with Q&A.

It does not lend any spiritual perspective, so sharing how one's faith impacts the neurodiverse relationship could be a welcome addition in a future work. Nor does it include what happens if the relationship does not last. Consequently, it is not a thorough work on each issue that might come up in these types of relationships. However, it does provide insights into the various trials faced by each couple, and tips on how to overcome them, so its purpose is achieved. Each person shares how they each perceive similar events, and how each other's expectations affect them personally.

Not necessarily academic in nature, there are no footnotes, although at the end of the book a recommended list of U.K. websites is provided as well as a bibliography. A glossary of terms is provided in the beginning of the book. It could be a good addition for an academic library that has a neuropsychology program, or for a public library which might have interested users facing similar scenarios.

Reviewer

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