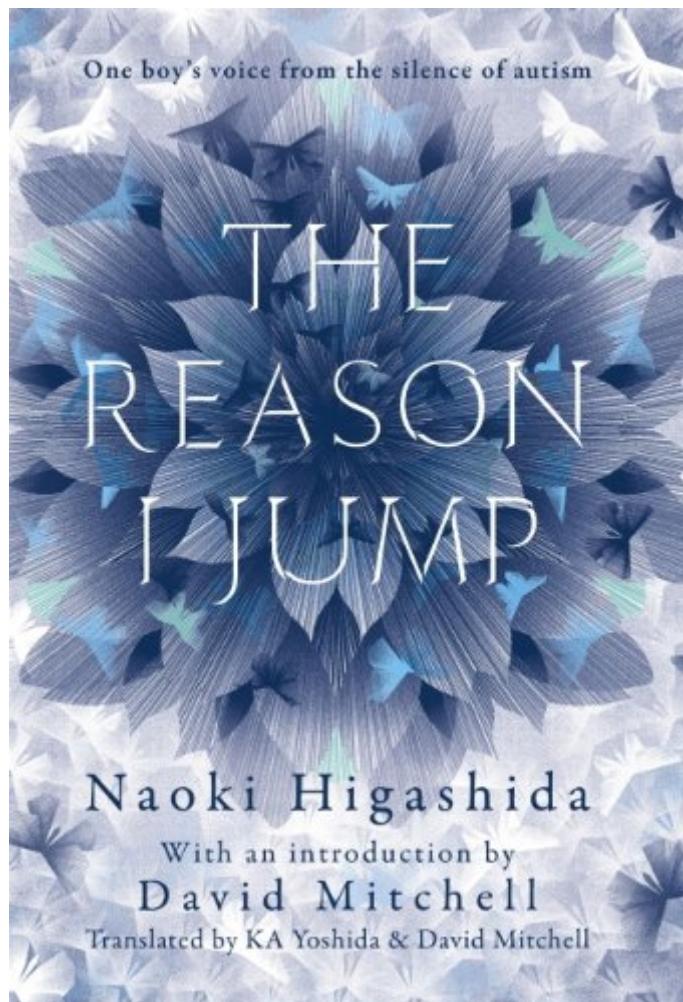


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The Reason I Jump: One Boy's Voice From The Silence Of Autism: One Boy's Voice From The Silence Of Autism



Synopsis

The No. 1 Sunday Times and New York Times bestseller. Written by Naoki Higashida when he was only thirteen, this remarkable book provides a rare insight into the often baffling behaviour of autistic children. Using a question and answer format, Naoki explains things like why he talks loudly or repeats the same questions, what causes him to have panic attacks, and why he likes to jump. He also shows the way he thinks and feels about his world - other people, nature, time and beauty, and himself. Abundantly proving that people with autism do possess imagination, humour and empathy, he also makes clear how badly they need our compassion, patience and understanding. David Mitchell and his wife have translated Naoki's book so that it might help others dealing with autism and generally illuminate a little-understood condition. It gives us an exceptional chance to enter the mind of another and see the world from a strange and fascinating perspective. The book also features eleven original illustrations, inspired by Naoki's words, by the artistic duo Kai and Sunny.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read a lot of books about autism because my brother is severely autistic. I am very thankful to Nagoki Higashida for answered questions that I have about my brother's behavior and the way that he thinks. And also answering some questions that had not even occurred to me! His voice came

through this book as very genuine and I have recognized some of the same feelings in my brother as Nagoki Higashida. In fact I wish that my brother had the experience of being trained to use the special keyboard. So many things are locked inside for my brother but Nagoki been has let some of them out via the keyboard. My brother also jumps. He always does this just before he starts a walk. He also loves to walk in places filled with nature. He wanted to go to a park when I asked him where on our latest visit. I have read quite a few books written by Asperger's but this one by a boy who has autism rings home for me. My brother can speak but usually he does not initiate any conversation, he is limited to a few words of a reply. I can see the struggle that he goes through when he is trying to "grab" something to say. I was aware of the overload of senses but I didn't realize that the floors could be tilting for him. That must be why he touches the wall here and there trying to get some balance. I thought that the author really conveyed how regular people can hurt people with autism's feelings. I knew that from being with my brother. I have heard people talk about my brother in front of him and that is mean. I know the author would feel the same way. This book is very valuable for understanding autism and I wish that caregivers in group homes and others who work with people who have autism would read this book. When I read this book, I truly wanted more.

Another reviewer of this book gave it 1 star, apparently because she questioned its authenticity. That is, she questioned whether it is truly the work of an autistic young man, as it is claimed to be. Considering the book's subject matter, it is perhaps not surprising that her suspicion was met with sometimes vitriolic comments, as some readers seemed to take it as an affront to their intensely-lived personal experience. But at the risk of attracting similar attacks, I must admit to my own kind of skepticism. Certainly, the aforementioned reviewer's focus on word choice is irrelevant here as a criterion by which to infer authorship, as this is a translation. But I agree with that reviewer's concern about the author's tendency to speak for all autistic people. Though some comments questioned this observation, it is not merely an interpretation or projection; Mr. Higashida does in fact repeatedly and explicitly speak for all autistic people. If you don't yet have the book, you can see just as well in the preview the repeated use of "we" or "us" in phrases and sentences that characterize a behavior, attitude, belief or experience as common to all autistic people. This is an appropriate cause for concern, as there is great diversity in all populations, including those with autism. It would be unfortunate if readers without direct experience to the contrary were misled into thinking that one autistic person can speak for all. So it is offensive that several comments insult that reviewer for observing this tendency, accusing her of inventing this notion, as if it is she who thinks all autistic people are alike. Such rough treatment demonstrates the most dangerous kind of

ignorance, the kind that is too arrogant (or perhaps simply too necessary) to recognize itself.

The book's author is a 13-year-old Japanese young autistic male. The book was originally published in Japan, in 2007. Persons with autism tend to end up alone in a corner because communication for them is so fraught with problems. Emotional poverty and an aversion to company are consequences of autism. Naoki begins by telling us that he has difficulty trying to speak with others, though he does better with writing. He also has difficulty remembering, and therefore repeats questions. Another problem - he doesn't look at people's eyes very much - it feels creepy so he avoids it. He's usually anxious that he's causing trouble for others or getting on their nerves, making it hard to stay around others. Lining things up is a classic autistic trait. It is hard to know what to make of the book. I'm mildly autistic, and share a number of the traits mentioned by Naoki, including most of those already listed. However, when the translator (David Mitchell) concludes that, contrary to common perception, autistic people are overly sensitive, not insensitive to others' feelings, I strongly disagree - I've always had difficulty 'reading' others and their actual/potential reactions to what I might say or write - even though I've made increasing efforts to do so as I've gotten older. As for 'jumping,' I thought the topic would focus on panic attacks (loud noises, bright lights) - another lifelong and increasing problem for myself. Nor, unlike Naoki, do I talk loudly, speak in a peculiar way, take ages to respond to questions, or ask the same questions repeatedly. On the + side, I've done well as computer programming, a task many others find tedious and reportedly a strength of many with autism. On the other hand, I also find most repetitive tasks boring.

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The Autism Discussion Page on anxiety, behavior, school, and parenting strategies: A toolbox for helping children with autism feel safe, accepted, and competent
Autism Spectrum Disorder (revised): The Complete Guide to Understanding Autism
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