

Perspectives from an autistic man

December 28, 2019 | 38 upvotes | by [thereslcjg2000](#)

As a young man on the autism spectrum (I was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome back when it was still an official diagnosis), I feel like my life and my interests are usually poorly served by culture in general and specifically by both ends of the political spectrum. Most obviously a lot of people equate autism with stupidity, and with being a cute, funny man child. I don't see too much effort to stop those attitudes; I honestly see far more people encouraging and defending those mindsets.

Particularly, the political right really seems to hate autistic people. It rarely even tries to hide this fact; you constantly hear MAGA types using "retarded" and "autistic" as insults, and if you call them out they'll tell you you're just enforcing PC culture. Hopefully everyone on this board agrees that this is toxic behavior.

The left is less blatant in its hatred of autistic people, but in my experience it still generally hates them, particularly autistic men. This is because their agenda relies on the idea that all men are able to understand social interactions and read between the lines of what a woman wants. An entire group that is medically proven to struggle with those things is seen as a threat to their narrative. Consequently, the far left (particularly the feminist movement) doesn't seem to have much sympathy for autistic men's struggles. The meaninglessness and conformist bent associated with the term "creepy" has been noted before, and in my opinion it's often used to shame traditionally autistic traits.

I really wish more effort was made to explain the subtleties of social interaction and less was made to simply shame people for not understanding them.

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Comments

[deleted] • 16 points • 28 December, 2019 07:00 PM

I keep spamming this article about the damaging aspects of creepiness discourse everywhere, but here it's particularly apt. It's also heartening that the author is as left-wing as they come.

Photogoblin • 7 points • 28 December, 2019 07:53 PM

Thanks, great article!

Aaod • 10 points • 28 December, 2019 10:16 PM

Because women are more likely than men to experience physical and sexual threat in their daily lives, they are also more likely to judge others (usually men) to be creepy. Judgments of creepiness, however, are not necessarily reliable.

Men are far more likely to be victims of violence and the sexual part is only because male sexual stuff is under reported. It is just women listening to the media and them being overly concerned with looks that is causing this fear not actual reality.

PrincessofPatriarchy • 11 points • 29 December, 2019 12:24 AM

It's not just listening to the media. We have research that shows that women are socialized from a young age to fear rape, and to take protective measures. Even when we evaluate the differences in the way that girls and boys are educated about sex in the US we see that boys largely learn about preventing pregnancy and STD's and girls learn a lot more about never leaving their drink unattended, always telling someone where they will be meeting a new date, and generally learning to be afraid. It's not just a bunch of women listening to the media, it's a fear that's ingrained in many girls before they are even teenagers.

Aaod • 4 points • 29 December, 2019 12:38 AM

True I suppose at this point it becomes a self reinforcing mechanism where people enforce the same ideas on young kids because it they have been so indoctrinated by it.

PrincessofPatriarchy • 7 points • 29 December, 2019 01:05 AM

Yes, it's a cycle.

Regs2 • 16 points • 28 December, 2019 05:39 PM

I understand you completely. We're supposed to just get it when it comes to our interactions with women, but I don't at all. This egg shell dance has just made me not want interact with female co-workers because I can't read in-between the lines and understand all the subtexts of an interaction. I feel like a little awkward when I socialize with dudes but I know I won't get reported to HR like if I say the wrong thing to a female co-worker.

steamedhamjob • 8 points • 28 December, 2019 09:13 PM

I don't even think women actually get it. I've always been pretty good at it, but as a trans woman, I have realized that being able to read between the lines is simply a trait some humans have and has nothing to do with gender. Sure women might be more inclined to be concerned with other women's problems, but saying that the problem is that men can't read between the lines is blatant prejudice.

bkrugby78 • 13 points • 28 December, 2019 07:51 PM

There is a lot I don't know about autism. I have a nephew who is autistic. All I know, is that sometimes he says things that are very awkward. He's a good kid, but I tend to worry about him.

Personally, I hate when people use medical conditions as insults (as you mentioned above). It would definitely benefit all of us to be mindful of what we say.

liztu_june • 0 points • 4 January, 2020 06:14 AM

Are you flu, you must be flu only a flu will obsess over something like this.

Iaboveall • 12 points • 28 December, 2019 07:43 PM

Many feminists simply don't care about men's issues and only pretend to receive social brownie points. Fortunately, most women do not identify as feminists.

Oncefa2 • 11 points • 28 December, 2019 05:45 PM

The interaction between men's rights and mental health is an interesting topic. There is one diagnosis that, for decades, we used to think effected women far more than men. But what we eventually found was that most men with this disorder were arrested and in jail. Women who had it escaped prison and eventually got diagnosed. So the stats ended up showing it being a gendered diagnosis until we figured that out.

I imagine having autism as a man makes it difficult to navigate the dating world and even interact with women in general. Normal men worry about things like being accidentally accused of harassment. But at least I can usually tell how a woman feels about something. I imagine never knowing if a brief faux pas triggered a trip to HR can be difficult to deal with.

ShawshankRetention • 12 points • 28 December, 2019 07:20 PM

The problem with autistic men is not dating (most dont even think about it) but simply not being able to replicate the nonverbal communication.

If you say something innocent in a low tone, it will be taken as harassment, but if you say something dirty in a joking manner it will often be taken as small talk.

The problem is when an and when an autistic person say something in a flat tone, most people dont manage to interpret the intent and a paranoid feminist will interpret it in the worst way possible.

Most autistic woman dont have that kind of problem as we are more lenient with women.

liztu_june • 2 points • 4 January, 2020 06:17 AM

The problem with autistic men is not dating (most dont even think about it) but simply not being able to replicate the nonverbal communication.

Autistics normally are nomrally hypersexual or close to being asexual, there seems sexuality with to not be a lot of middle ground wiht them when it comes to sexuality with.

PrincessofPatriarchy • 8 points • 29 December, 2019 12:51 AM

I think it depends. There's value in recognizing that some people are going to struggle more with social cues. But then there's also a difference between recognizing hardship and coddling people. Having a harder time does not equate to something being impossible to learn.

If an autistic man for instance doesn't understand something like that over-sharing on a first date can be a turn-off then that is a moment that involves some compassion and understanding. He's not being a creep, he's just not

able to read social cues the same way.

But if an autistic man doesn't understand that groping and grabbing women sexually isn't okay, then it's not always reasonable to expect people to allow inappropriate things to happen to them just because you want them to feel bad for you.

I do generally disagree with creep shaming unless it's blatantly inappropriate behavior. There's been times where I've pushed back against people calling a man creepy. But there's different levels of what is reasonable to compromise on and what is not.

To give an example I had a guy come up and grope me when in high school. I complained to my parents about it, and they called the school and told them what happened. The school got the school resource officer involved and he interviewed both me and the guy. The guy had some mental disabilities (not autism or aspergers) but the officer told me that in his opinion the guy was using his slight disabilities to claim ignorance when he really believed the guy knew what he was doing.

Meanwhile, the guy was crying and going around to all our friends and throughout the hallway claiming that I'm ruining his life and making up things. The officer told me he wanted me to press charges.

I felt so bad that I just declined to press charges and said I was happy enough that he was talked to. The officer was really upset about this, he tried to convince me to pursue it saying he's worried about this guy, that he feels this student uses his disabilities to get away with things and that he may do it someone again. He even called my dad and tried to convince my dad to talk to me. But my dad said that I'm an adult and if I don't want to press charges it was my decision.

The officer accepted my decision but was worried about it. He said this incident would be recorded on the guy's file so that if any other complaint or problem came up in the future they could at least reference that it wasn't the first time.

Meanwhile the guy still went around acting like I was pressing charges on him when I wasn't. I was completely unsure what to believe. Maybe he didn't know. Maybe it was an accident. Maybe it wasn't. I was getting hit from so many different angles I didn't know what to do.

In the end I chose to believe his story, that he didn't mean to do it. And I let it go. But he continued to badmouth me up until we graduated. I still have no idea if I did the right thing or not and go back and forth on it. Sometimes I feel bad I got him in trouble at all. Sometimes I feel bad I didn't trust the officer and pursue things further. Sometimes I just want to forget it happened.

But there is definitely a certain level of resentment that as the person who was wronged, it fell on me to have to defend the guy who groped me and make excuses for him. And it definitely sucks that even when I sat there and defended him, he spent the rest of school making me the evil bad guy. I didn't ask to be put in that situation but I don't believe it was reasonable for someone to walk up behind me and grab and squeeze my boobs and then just say it's fine because he has some developmental delay.

I have no idea what was going through his head. Maybe he really didn't mean to. Maybe he didn't know it was wrong (I doubt that since he didn't do it to anyone else). But it's really hard to put people in situations where they get coerced or assaulted or grabbed and demand that they have empathy for the person who did it to them, and even defend them against facing any consequences for it. The fact is we have no way of knowing the difference between someone who knows better and someone who doesn't know better and when it comes to personal safety people are more inclined to lean on the side that keeps them safe rather than the side of giving automatic trust to other people.

thereslcjg2000[S] • 5 points • 29 December, 2019 03:48 AM

I'm so sorry that happened to you. I absolutely do not condone groping or other forms of genuine sexual

assault, regardless of who engages in them.

[deleted] • 2 points • 29 December, 2019 12:18 PM

Groping etc. definitely is way out of line, and this should be made absolutely clear to people developmentally disabled people. Perhaps with more understanding and care than when a regular asshole does it, but they should still be made to learn the difference between right and wrong.

I'm also sorry, going by your story it seems like you really shouldn't be beating yourself up for this.

liztu_june • 2 points • 4 January, 2020 06:23 AM

Unforanlty there was a time when sexual assault was not talked about and some times people with a disability do not learn that it wrong. Nowadays it harder to make that case, which is a good thing because less people have to live with having done that behavior.

highmrk • 2 points • 31 December, 2019 03:09 AM

Being a man with autism is like having all the fears of being seen as a creep, but put on steroids. I can't even fathom it. Hope you do well. But read some Dale Carnegie, you can get a lot better at it

liztu_june • 2 points • 4 January, 2020 06:12 AM

I am autistic and I have been called creepy mutable time. Feminism have a low tolerance for autistic men when I was religious there where a group of a religious girl at my church that hated me because I couldn't read there any verbal language. It like I am sorry that I can't read you any verbal communications but I am not a mind reader.

serpentineeyelash • 2 points • 8 January, 2020 10:28 AM

Hi, I'm the creator of this subreddit as you may or may not know.

I forgot to reply earlier, but I completely agree with you! I'm also an autistic man and am not impressed with either side of the political spectrum.

Xemnas81 • 2 points • 26 February, 2020 07:47 PM

I'm frequently in discussion groups where women admit that they have an autistic colleague with a crush on them, who they want to go away/report to HR. Most aren't bad enough to want to get the guy fired or prosecuted but some are. They hate that autism is seen as an excuse for enabling this. But they also hate that guys come online to try and figure out what they're doing wrong.

The rule of gynocentrism is agency; women are never entirely responsible because of some obscure environmental context or historical conditions, while men are always responsible no matter the environmental context