In his autobiography, *Look Me in the Eye*, John Elder Robison provides the reader with a powerful and personal account of life with Asperger's syndrome. With a natural writing style, Robison succeeds in weaving the effects of his undiagnosed Asperger's into his broader life story. He writes about his earliest years, when his desire for friendship with his peers often led him to painful rejection rather than human connection. An unhappy home made this all the more difficult, and his account of this period of his life is one of the more touching sections of the book. Discussing his parents' failing marriage, Robison addresses the broader effects of mental illness on family life. Alcohol drives his father into increasingly erratic anger and aggression, and his mother's paranoia about her children's and her own safety grows. Robison lays bare the path of developing mental illness with honesty, while showing an admirable forgiveness that is sometimes difficult to understand.

Without the supports of family, Robison survived by turning inward and developing his natural talents as a trickster. With undoubted resourcefulness, he overcame his Aspergian traits to learn and develop socially, making friends and becoming an expert in all things automotive and electronic. However, lack of understanding serves as a recurring theme in Robison's life, propelling him out of school and into the world to fend for himself. Rejected at home and at school, he found his own way. The colourful anecdotes described by the author as he found his way contrast sharply and effectively with the austere and factual writing style of the book. For example, we are matter-of-factly informed of his re-enactment of an occult murder/suicide involving a mannequin for the benefit of the terrified local police. Robison's life is far from the boring world of the human computer that many associate with Asperger's syndrome.

Throughout the book, the reader sees Robison adjust to the particular problems of his Aspergian personality, and become increasingly integrated into the world. He finds a fulfilling job, builds a family and reconnects with his estranged parents. An interest in and talent for working with cars is the foundation for a career repairing the more exclusive models he has long loved. From rocky beginnings, trying to befriend his peers in school by patting them with a stick, he learns to form relationships. A first failed marriage provides him with a son, while second time around he succeeds in building a lasting and happy relationship.

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Robison, who remained undiagnosed until the age of 40, leaves us in no doubt as to the difficulty that accompanies being misunderstood. Throughout his teens and twenties we see him seek understanding and, in the process, develop and grow. Full understanding of his personality came late, but by this stage he had realised the strengths of being an “Aspergian”. Robison proves himself particularly resourceful and talented: he learns to communicate by observing successful interactions among his peers, and controls his more eccentric features around strangers with rare self-awareness and discipline. Diagnosis in mental health is often greeted with disbelief and anger, but for Robison this served as the moment he connected unreservedly with his identity. He is provided with a schema to normalise his life. *Look Me in the Eye* is the happy story of a man who struggles with life but finally connects with the world through the strength of his personality, and knowledge of his diagnosis. For the reader with an academic interest in mental health, this is a refreshingly human encounter with a syndrome that is more easily understood academically than emotionally. We learn that behind the blank facial expression and awkward conversation lies a depth of emotion that we are rarely shown.