

Recommended Books

Some of these books deal directly with Asperger syndrome. Others contain useful ideas about people, systems, language, and life. All have earned a permanent place on my shelf.

When first diagnosed with Asperger syndrome I was told folks have one of three reactions:

- “Oh woah is me...”
- “No, not me!”
- “Is that all it is? Where’s the manual?”

Luckily, I had the last one. I wanted the owner’s manual. Something along the line of Dr. Spock’s book: *Baby and Child Care* - but for Aspies.

I had to resort to an assortment to get what I needed but these three were essential:

- *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* by Tony Attwood
- *The Asperkid's Secret Book of Social Rules: The Handbook of Not-So-Obvious Social Guidelines for Tweens and Teens with Asperger Syndrome* by Jennifer Cook O'Toole
- *Autism and Asperger Syndrome Annotated Edition* by Uta Frith (Editor)

I’ve read many more, but these got me started and were essential establishing a baseline. Let me tell you a little about my experience with each of these books, in the order which I read them.

1. *[The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome](#)* by Tony Attwood

My initial research indicated that Dr. Attwood was the current expert on the subject. I came away with the following impressions. He does indeed know a lot about the subject. In reading his book I found that about 50% was directly relatable to my life experience. (60 years of it by that time). I also realized that there was an awful lot that people did not know about the subject, but the information in that book was no less valuable. I took the value I could find, was very thankful for it, wondered if the other 50% related to other Aspies, and moved to:

2. *The Asperkid's Secret Book of Social Rules: The Handbook of Not-So-Obvious Social Guidelines for Tweens and Teens with Asperger Syndrome* by Jennifer Cook O'Toole

This book is a *must read* for anyone with Asperger syndrome, or anyone who knows someone with Asperger syndrome. And, I can't over-emphasize *must read*! This book is packed with practical advice and information for any Aspie. Things that I never knew I should or should not be doing – things I should or should not be saying. This is saying a lot. I had been faking it for 60+ years without even knowing these social rules existed.

Get this book!

(I must note here that the version I read is the one listed above – before the shoe-on-head phenomenon crept into the mix. I.e., before Asperger syndrome disappeared into the spectrum.) (Note: It's a must for *any* age.)

3. *Autism and Asperger Syndrome Annotated Edition* by Uta Frith (Editor)

I liked this book for several reasons. It was more clinical in its approach, so that perspective was valuable to me in that I could see what the lab folks were thinking. It was also valuable in that it had the prevailing view (at the time – this was also pre-DSM 5) among the folks who were diagnosing and treating the syndrome. One of the valuable parts for me was a translation of Dr. Hans Asperger's paper. I had already translated it myself, so this gave me the perspective of what it really said, and what the psychological community believed it said. This perspective helped me understand their view better. Having the view from the inside - insight they lacked.

Here's another book I found particularly interesting:

Asperger's on the Inside by Michelle Vines

It was different in that it had:

- An insider perspective, i.e., the author has Asperger syndrome and speaks from that side of the lens,
- She takes a systematic approach; running down the list of symptoms and giving her take on what is happening to her,
- Gives real-life anecdotes to tie some of the beliefs to or dispel same.

It was nice to have the perspective of someone on the same side of the lens. It also broke the belief that Asperger syndrome is a uniquely male phenomenon.

And with that in mind, I move to a book I also found particularly interesting as well as practically informative:

[Aspergirls: Empowering Females with Asperger Syndrome](#) by Rudy Simone

Rudy Simone's book reinforces the idea that both boys and girls can have Asperger syndrome, with her unique combination of anecdotal storytelling and practical, and for me very usable, checklists of actual behaviors of Aspergirls. To quote a wise woman, "If human relations between men and women are challenging, human relations between men and women, with at least one of them having Asperger syndrome, are challenging¹⁰."

(Challenging to the power of ten!)

I can attest to that and to the usefulness of Rudy Simone's checklists.

RELATED TO THE SUBJECT

These books are in some way related to Asperger syndrome but not core material.

[Late-Talking Children](#) by Thomas Sowell The author's own experiences as the father of a late-talking child led to the formation of a group of more than fifty sets of parents of similar children: children who talk late but think fast. His warning about overdiagnosis when services, schooling, and reimbursement hinge on a label, institutions will favor breadth over precision. This piqued my interest in diagnoses overall and the movement of AS into the spectrum.

The Thomas Sowell Reader Hardcover by Thomas Sowell I can recommend any of Thomas Sowell's books, but this one I much enjoyed, as it gave an overview of his writings covering topics from late-talking children to "tax cuts for the rich," baseball, race, war, the role of judges, medical care, and the rhetoric of politicians. It's a must for those who want an overview of his writings, as well as, those who enjoy a chapter as a short story.

FIELD GUIDES FOR THE REST OF IT – Books that are Useful to Aspies, and really anyone, to Navigate the World

[A Complaint Is a Gift](#) - Janelle Barlow & Claus Møller

In my first sales class the professor said, "Everyone is Always Selling – All the Time!" This book relates not just to sales and service in the commercial realm, but to everyday interactions with people. It reframes criticism as information you can use and teaches practical ways to turn conflict into cooperation. The formulas work in many and varied situations, at work, at home and in the World.