

Perspective

Written by Gayle Nobel

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Blog-a-thon Day 11

I took Kyle to the park yesterday... his first day out in 10 days.

He emerged from the car, somewhat stunned, like Brendan Fraser in *Blast from the Past*. Squinting into the bright, winter, Arizona sunlight, Kyle just stood there, unwilling to move. I thought he would be excited to be outside and want to run around or at least take a brisk walk after being home and sedentary for so long. That was my agenda, not his.

Slowly we began to move, but clearly, we were not going to walk much. We ended up on a bench by the lake. It was peaceful and relaxing. Lots of time to think and just be. I had decided to keep him home one more day just to be sure he was ok. Good call. He was ok, but I think a buffer day was an important part of his recovery process.

My mind wandered.

This is really nice. Why don't I ever come sit and watch the ducks at the park? Maybe I should come here and contemplate life once in awhile.

I observed mothers with their little toddlers over on the play equipment and began thinking of all the times I took my own kids to the park. Seems like a lifetime ago. I miss those times... just a little, because I so love having grown up kids too. But maybe someday I will be doing the park thing with grandkids. Ok, let's not rush it.

It's so relaxing watching the ducks. And Kyle is enjoying the pigeons. Yucky pigeons. I have some bad childhood memories of pigeons growing up in NYC. I shudder to think of the one that got caught in the open window crack of our 16th floor apartment. But Kyle is showing a definite reaction to their antics so I will put aside my bias and try to love the pigeons as they swoop just above our heads. Please don't poop. Please.

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I turn to look at Kyle and he has THE most serene expression on his face. Bathed in sunlight, he is utterly still and silent. He must feel so good. Then I begin thinking about what he might be experiencing during those most anxious times, like the week that just passed. Trying to put myself in his shoes, it's hard to fathom exactly what goes on for him, but he certainly seems miserable, tortured. It's easy to get caught up in how these episodes impact me. Life changes in an instant. He becomes more difficult care for and most of my freedom to go and do disappears. But any discomfort I experience is only a fraction of what he is going through and my heart goes out to him.

So where is this leading? I believe it's very important to take the perspective of the person with autism as often as possible. Here's a quote I have used in some of my autism presentations. It was written by someone on the autism spectrum.

"A normal person can do many things at once. While talking or listening, he can keep score of the mental state of the other person. He forms a web of associations. His imagination is active. He gives and interprets second meanings. He reads between the lines. He codes and receives facial messages. He uses and interprets body language. He uses appropriate eye gaze. And with all this, if need be, he can simultaneously maintain body coordination, drive, dance, walk, or operate machinery. And he can integrate feelings into his consciousness. All without much conscious effort. We could never hope to do simultaneously much of anything of the above."

Kinda makes you think, doesn't it?