

Wilmington Area Middle School
400 Wood Street
New Wilmington Pa, 16142

Dear Ms. Temple Grandin,

Several weeks ago, I started reading your book, Emergence Labeled Autistic. My mother suggested I read it because she thought it might help me because I am just like you in many ways. I am autistic too. When I first started reading your book, it made me feel that I was not alone and I couldn't put it down.

Like you, I have problems with an overstimulated nervous system too. I could understand how you felt when you got hugged because I didn't like to be hugged tight either. It made me feel uncomfortable. When I was small, I used to like to crawl, pounding my knees on the hardwood floors. This deep pressure made me feel good inside. I understand how the squeeze chute calmed you because I liked to lay under the couch cushions or curl up in a bean bag chair. These things made me feel calm and safe. Riding my bike, swimming, running and playing basketball help me now that I am older.

I especially enjoyed reading about your fixations because I have had a lot of my own. Some of my fixations were watching the windshield wipers in the car, making roads on the floor with masking tape and the Titanic. The doctors told my parents to take away the things that I was fixated on. When they did that I would cry and take temper tantrums. They were taking away the things I loved. My mother told me that when she met you at a conference she asked you for advice on my fixations. You told her to give them to me, but to turn them into something constructive. That is what she did and I am glad you told her that because it made me very happy when I was able to make models of the Titanic out of construction paper.

I have always liked going to school, but just like you, I have had problems socializing with my peers. I know how you felt when someone called you a retard. I have been called some bad names too. I used to get angry at them, but now I try to just ignore them and walk away. I have also felt sad and rejected when no one wanted to sit with me at lunch or when no one picked me to be their partner for a project. Being in a regular classroom and a buddy lunch program has helped me to make friends.

Ms. Grandin, I really enjoyed reading your book because your success has inspired me to work hard and do my best so that I can be successful like you. It also helped me to understand that there are other people in the world just like me.

Sincerely,

Chris Cox