

**Survey of Relationship Experiences  
of Neurotypicals in, or who have been in,  
an intimate adult relationship  
with someone who has, or is suspected of having,  
Asperger's/High functioning autism.**

conducted by

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This survey comprises 44 replies from 43 women and 1 man who voluntarily responded to advertisements on the internet, mail-outs and support group newsletters during May, June and July, 2016.

The survey was a self-assessment based on their personal experience of events and interactions occurring in their relationship.

The respondents rated the significance of each occurrence according to the descriptors “constantly”, “sometimes”, “not sure”, “occasionally”, “never”.

Respondents come from many different countries and remain anonymous for their own protection.

Footnotes at the end of the survey results clarify themes which emerged from the responses.

An appendix lists the developmental milestones achieved by neurotypicals (NT's) during their life span. The failure of those with ASD to reach many mature milestones causes the imbalance in relationship abilities of the couple.

Thank you sincerely to all those people who advertised the survey request and those who generously opened their hearts and answered the survey.

Verbatim quotes from respondents:

*“It was a good survey. It got right to the problems that I experience.”*

*“We need anything that is going to raise awareness of the devastation and trauma that can occur when you enter into a relationship with an Asperger partner.”*

*“This survey helped me to see things clearly and not feel so alone.”*

*“Thank you for your work to help other NTs in relationships with AS partners get the insight and help that they need. Its horribly isolating and it’s a rare person who can understand what it is that you are going through.”*

*“I hope all NT partners can find the strength to finally understand they deserve to live fulfilling, happy lives and to be loved and wanted.”*

<p><b>1. Are your perspectives, interests &amp; needs taken into consideration by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 9 not sure 2 occasionally 21 never 12</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“He doesn’t want to hear or consider what I think and feel. It will mess with his strict plans for the day which always exclude me unless he needs me to fix or organise something for him.”</i></p>
<p><b>2. Do interactions with your partner leave you feeling a loss of sense of self; insecurity or uncertainty of own reality?</b></p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 9 not sure 1 occasionally 4 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“He lies to cover his mistakes and denies everything I say”</i></p>
<p><b>3. Are your emotions acknowledged, validated and respected by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 4 not sure 2 occasionally 17 never 21</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“No matter how good your intentions are over time in a relationship they will wear you down until there is nothing left, they will win you over in the beginning and by the time you wake up to them and how they’re destroying you, you’re an empty shell and the damage is done.”</i></p>
<p><b>4. Does communication with your partner leave unresolved disputes, unfinished business and unresolved emotional upset?</b></p> <p>constantly 43 sometimes 0 not sure 0 occasionally 1 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“My decision (to leave) was akin to stepping off of a cliff and not knowing where I would land or how much it would hurt. I no longer cared... My husband was never violent and almost never visibly angry. His strategy when he did not want to do what I wanted was to say that we did not have the money. He is intellectually brilliant and did not appreciate the depth of my intuition or emotional intelligence. I was the annoying bell ringer never satisfied”</i></p> <p><i>“Nothing ever gets discussed, sorted or compromised no matter how often I bring an important subject up. He ignores me, says “I know you’ve told me” or explodes in a tantrum.”</i></p>
<p><b>5. Are there ever mutually satisfactory resolutions to everyday problems or situations?</b></p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 12 not sure 0 occasionally 20 never 11</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“I always compromise and he never does”</i></p>

<p><b>6.</b> Do you feel there's a lack of regard for your input, a return of understanding of your feelings or emotional support for you in everyday interaction?</p> <p>constantly 34 sometimes 6 not sure 0 occasionally 4 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I've tried to have conversations about lack of communication, intimacy, romance, togetherness, common interests, his Asperger's; over the years.... nothing has worked..."</i></p> <p><i>"My partner's idea of helping me emotionally is to leave me alone without contact until he thinks I've got over it."</i></p>
<p><b>7.</b> Is there spontaneous intimate connection such as "pillow talk", real friendship, loving foreplay in your relationship?</p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 1 not sure 0 occasionally 10 never 32</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Where are NTs supposed to get their emotional/loving feedback??"</i></p> <p><i>"We haven't shared a bedroom for many years"</i></p> <p><i>"I know he wanted me to initiate sex, but I could not do it, as it was too mechanical for me. I have ruminated constantly for months trying to figure out what I could have done differently, been more understanding, have sex, etc., but realize that it is a useless endeavour."</i></p>
<p><b>8.</b> Do you have a mutual process for redress and receive "natural justice" when you feel you've been wronged?</p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 0 not sure 9 occasionally 8 never 26</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He has stolen 20 years of my life that I can never recover and though I'm out of that relationship he is still harassing and intimidating me on a daily basis."</i></p>
<p><b>9.</b> Do your efforts to make yourself "heard" result in resolution of your difficulties?</p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 1 not sure 0 occasionally 14 never 29</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"There have been numerous safety issues, hygiene issues, medical issues, mental health issues social emotional issues, and no one listens."</i></p>
<p><b>10.</b> Are you and your partner able to engage in mutual loving banter?</p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 2 not sure 0 occasionally 7 never 34</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He takes offence and becomes aggressive if I chuckle at some of the silly things that happen in life."</i></p> <p><i>"He believes it's all about him even when it's not."</i></p>

<p><b>11. Do you feel loneliness in your relationship?</b></p> <p>constantly 37 sometimes 4 not sure 0 occasionally 2 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Who feels lovey about romantic things after taking care of a spouse who is only looking for a 'mommy' to care for his/her everyday needs?"</i></p>
<p><b>12. Are there many shared positive memories of you and your partner's lives together?</b></p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 14 not sure 1 occasionally 14 never 14</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"We were on 5 week trip together in Australia, which would have been glorious, had he been loving but he never touched me once."</i></p> <p><i>"He's a chameleon. He behaved one way before the marriage and became completely unlike the lovely man I married. He changed overnight."</i></p> <p><i>"My answer (constantly) is based on being around my children and creating memories with them and his "participation" by his obligation of being involved or being present but rarely actively participating in any event unless asked to do something, e.g. birthday party for kids, Christmas morning etc."</i></p>
<p><b>13. Are your perspectives acknowledged and validated by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 6 not sure 1 occasionally 13 never 24</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He pretends to listen when I tell him about my day, my fears, my worries or my joy. He says "Yeah" every now and then to make me think he's really listening. He won't even look at me when I speak. All he's doing is treating my life experiences as information being passed on to him so he pretends to acknowledge he's received the information. He does nothing else, no kind of response, ever."</i></p>
<p><b>14. Does your partner deny your truth?</b></p> <p>constantly 34 sometimes 6 not sure 1 occasionally 2 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"If I hear him say "that's not right" one more time I'll scream!"</i></p>
<p><b>15. Do you feel gas-lighted, manipulated into doubting your own truth and your sanity?</b></p> <p>constantly 26 sometimes 14 not sure 2 occasionally 1 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I used to, but now I know not to be dragged into his nonsense since I've woken up to his lies and deception."</i></p>

<p><b>16. Do you feel self-doubt?</b></p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 11 not sure 0 occasionally 2 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"His constant denial of what I saw happen is unbelievable. He always says "No that's not right."</i></p>
<p><b>17. Do you have a broad, fulfilling life and social experiences?</b></p> <p>constantly 7 sometimes 9 not sure 0 occasionally 19 never 9</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I have disconnected and have my own life. It still makes me sad if I think about it too much"</i></p> <p><i>"His 'Normal' became my "Normal" ...I was very social once upon a time."</i></p>
<p><b>18. Do you feel you are the object of misunderstandings?</b></p> <p>constantly 31 sometimes 11 not sure 1 occasionally 1 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He deliberately railroads me and side tracks if he doesn't want to or can't find the words to talk to me. He only hears the first four or five words I say then cuts in, fills in the gaps with what he assumes he KNOWS I was going to say, just to shut me up."</i></p>
<p><b>19. Do you feel unfairly blamed?</b></p> <p>constantly 31 sometimes 8 not sure 1 occasionally 3 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I'm 'nagging'".</i></p> <p><i>"He told me all he wanted out of a marriage was someone who made a good salary, had her own teeth, and talked nice to him so the only thing that would make things better is if I talked nice to him more often. I feel like I am losing my mind."</i></p>
<p><b>20. Have you developed feelings of strong anger arising from what you consider to be injustice and false accusations in your relationship?</b></p> <p>constantly 27 sometimes 13 not sure 0 occasionally 3 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Since I moved out I am not nearly as angry with him and far less resentful".</i></p> <p><i>"I wonder whether he knew he had Asperger's when I married him and he didn't tell me, I feel ripped off and cheated out of a normal relationship and what was supposed to be a life together with the person I thought was for life, for me and my children"</i></p>

<p><b>21. Do you feel a strong requirement socially and emotionally to fix the consequences of your partner's inappropriate actions or words outside home?</b></p> <p>constantly 23 sometimes 9 not sure 0 occasionally 9 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I say <b>never</b> because I learned to disconnect by talking to others in the same situation."</i></p>
<p><b>22. Do you feel you are living in insufficient or unsafe conditions?</b></p> <p>constantly 13 sometimes 11 not sure 3 occasionally 10 never 7</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Court systems know very little about parents with Asperger's...I am a successful highly educated professional, my daughters are very successful... he did not want them to ever leave the house... not sure how it happened but they did leave, two cheered in college, got degrees, 3<sup>rd</sup> one almost finished... If it has been left to him, they would be at home in front of TV or computer."</i></p>
<p><b>23. Is there a dismissal by your partner of your concerns and reality?</b></p> <p>constantly 34 sometimes 10 not sure 0 occasionally 0 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"as if I don't matter and my life doesn't matter."</i></p>
<p><b>24. Do you feel intimidated &amp; humiliated during interactions with your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 20 sometimes 15 not sure 2 occasionally 6 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I'm afraid of him at a low level. He's so unpredictable when I try to connect in any way."</i></p> <p><i>"I always feel the sting of rejection, being belittled, ignored, demeaned and humiliated, as if I don't matter and my life doesn't matter. I don't know why I bother to talk to him at all."</i></p>
<p><b>25. Are you affected by family violence and or abuse?</b></p> <p>constantly 10 sometimes 6 not sure 4 occasionally 2 never 22</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I answered as if "abuse" included emotional abuse which I endure constantly"</i></p> <p><i>"He is not capable of showing any empathy and always thinks that women are there to look after him. Whenever we talk on the phone, he lashes out with threats of violence etc. if I break up with him."</i></p>

<p><b>26.</b> Do you feel there's a deficiency of positive feedback or assistance in your relationship?</p> <p>constantly 38 sometimes 4 not sure 1 occasionally 1 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"His lack of executive function in most areas of life astounds me. He looks so normal yet is so dysfunctional seemingly unable to see what needs to be done or what I do."</i></p>
<p><b>27.</b> Do you experience undesired isolation?</p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 12 not sure 1 occasionally 2 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He doesn't have any friends and we don't socialize".</i></p>
<p><b>28.</b> Do you feel your relationship experience provides options for your full participation in life?</p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 8 not sure 4 occasionally 13 never 19</p> <p>Total 44</p>	
<p><b>29.</b> Do you lead a controlled, narrow social life?</p> <p>constantly 22 sometimes 11 not sure 2 occasionally 7 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"His seemingly benign strict daily routine is stultifying. It crushes any spontaneity or initiative."</i></p>
<p><b>30.</b> Do you feel there's a deficiency of warm physical contact in your relationship?</p> <p>constantly 38 sometimes 3 not sure 1 occasionally 0 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I said "never" as I have liaisons with other men so I don't feel so lonely."</i></p>



<p><b>31. Do you lead a life of enforced or deliberate celibacy?</b></p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 5 not sure 2 occasionally 5 never 4</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"We don't share a bedroom"</i></p> <p><i>"I chose that we no longer share the same bedroom or bathroom as I am not comfortable with my partner in these spaces any more. I no longer have any expectations of what 'should be' the norm!"</i></p>
<p><b>32. Have you been subjected to unwanted or uncomfortable sexual assault in your relationship?</b></p> <p>constantly 1 sometimes 10 not sure 0 occasionally 8 never 25</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He has a strong/creepy interest in violent pornography" (5 respondents)</i></p> <p><i>"When I approach my wife she is so passive I feel like I'm committing an assault on her. We have not been intimate for years because of this."</i></p> <p><i>"He rushes at me flapping his hands around and expects me to find this exciting. It scares me to death. I feel so afraid when he does this. I rebuff him and then he gets angry."</i></p> <p><i>"when we did have sex, the lack of connection and his focus only upon his own pleasure and using me for it brought rape to mind. He would stop if he had noticed or learned my responses/feelings about it. Quickly became celibate anyway"</i></p>
<p><b>33. Do you feel an obligation to repair social gaffes &amp; misunderstandings by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 20 sometimes 10 not sure 0 occasionally 10 never 4</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I have his back, yet he doesn't have mine."</i></p>
<p><b>34. Do you feel socially mimicked and depended upon as a social "seeing-eye dog" by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 17 sometimes 13 not sure 0 occasionally 5 never 9</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I have made a life for myself without him"</i></p>

<p><b>35. Do you feel more like a parent to your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 8 not sure 2 occasionally 4 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I feel like the only adult in the house even with a husband and my children are all in their twenties"</i></p> <p><i>"I am feeling tired of looking after him like my son and often not getting any reciprocal affection"</i></p> <p><i>"It is exhausting"</i></p>
<p><b>36. Do you feel you are an object of manipulation?</b></p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 4 not sure 3 occasionally 5 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He never asks outright for help. He says "The computer's broken." Just makes a statement. He knows I'll go and fix it. Then he'll take the praise from others when he tells them he fixed the computer. I wish he'd learn to politely ask for help and admit he can't do it. Instead he pretends he can do anything for people outside. I won't help him anymore unless he asks politely."</i></p>
<p><b>37. Do inconsistent messages of love characterise your relationship?</b></p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 7 not sure 5 occasionally 3 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He went on anti-anxiety medication and that has at least controlled the outbursts and some of his obsessive fears over money. He doesn't understand why that hasn't "fixed" everything and why I am still unhappy. I yell, I scream, I sleep in a different room and he tells me he is happy. It is hopeless."</i></p>
<p><b>38. Do you feel a loss of trust in your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 27 sometimes 12 not sure 1 occasionally 1 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	
<p><b>39. Do you feel a loss of trust in yourself and your ability to function in everyday life?</b></p> <p>constantly 21 sometimes 13 not sure 0 occasionally 8 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	

<p><b>40. Do you feel unrequited love?</b></p> <p>constantly 26 sometimes 8 not sure 6 occasionally 0 never 4</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Not anymore, I know he's unable to truly love in a selfless way. There's always a motive of his own when he <b>tries</b> to be kind.</i></p> <p><i>"I feel an ongoing grief for what never was and never will be."</i></p> <p><i>"(After leaving) I am feeling stronger each day but sometimes I still grieve the loss of a real relationship."</i></p> <p><i>"I used to, I don't care anymore"</i></p>
<p><b>41. Have you lost self-esteem?</b></p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 9 not sure 0 occasionally 7 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I am finding myself again"</i></p>
<p><b>42. Do you feel unappreciated by your partner?</b></p> <p>constantly 33 sometimes 11 not sure 0 occasionally 0 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He doesn't even know I exist as a separate human being. He thinks I'm just here for his benefit."</i></p>
<p><b>43. Do you feel manipulated and used by your partner to solely meet his or her needs?</b></p> <p>constantly 23 sometimes 11 not sure 3 occasionally 5 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I am still surprised that despite my education, etc., that I did not recognize my situation for what it was sooner than I did. I feel it speaks to the incredible ability to portray the role of partner for a time, which is long enough for a NT to incorrectly feel connected, especially if they become the "Special Object of Interest". I was definitely my husband's special object of interest, until which time it became his female supervisor, who fell in love with him. To this day, it's clear that he will never understand how or why it hurt me to be called her name, have him spend time with her, and no longer engage in interactions with me. As you can imagine, the fact that they did not have sex, made it "perfectly ok to do" in his opinion, and my thoughts on the matter be "irrational, jealous, crazy" and indicative of my being a horrible, critical, person."</i></p>

<p><b>44.</b> Do you feel an obligation to solely accommodate your partner's needs without compromise or negotiation?</p> <p>constantly 21 sometimes 11 not sure 2 occasionally 5 never 5</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Not anymore, I don't care about him or what he thinks".</i></p>
<p><b>45.</b> Do you feel hopelessness in seeking your partner's opinions or commitment to everyday situations?</p> <p>constantly 31 sometimes 10 not sure 2 occasionally 1 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Just yesterday I tried to have a conversation (which he just can't seem to join – EVER) and he wandered off to different topics to change the subject."</i></p>
<p><b>46.</b> Do you feel an obligation to prompt your partner or to fulfil their neglected duties?</p> <p>constantly 30 sometimes 7 not sure 0 occasionally 4 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"His lack of executive function in most areas of life astounds me. He looks so normal yet is so dysfunctional seemingly unable to see what needs to be done or what I do."</i></p>
<p><b>47.</b> Do you feel an obligation to solve urgent household disasters alone and for your partner?</p> <p>constantly 26 sometimes 7 not sure 2 occasionally 6 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"What he does or doesn't do affects me in negative ways so they need to be fixed by me."</i></p>

<p><b>48.</b> Do you feel an obligation to remind and prompt your partner with cues about everyday situations?</p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 7 not sure 1 occasionally 6 never 2</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I choose not to after all this time"</i></p>
<p><b>49.</b> Do you experience confusing interactions and conversations with your partner?</p> <p>constantly 34 sometimes 7 not sure 0 occasionally 3 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"We can't have a meaningful "adult" conversation"</i></p>
<p><b>50.</b> Do you have feelings of not being understood?</p> <p>constantly 38 sometimes 6 not sure 0 occasionally 0 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He tries to side track me with false accusations and then blaming me."</i></p>
<p><b>51.</b> Do you feel the need to guide and assist your partner to avoid embarrassment for them?</p> <p>constantly 20 sometimes 13 not sure 1 occasionally 9 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I used to protect him but not anymore it's too stressful for me and I don't care about him anymore"</i></p>
<p><b>52.</b> Do you feel you have a superficial, unfulfilling relationship?</p> <p>constantly 34 sometimes 8 not sure 0 occasionally 1 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"It's never a relationship, not even a friendship; just an uneasy truce with ASD's needs always dictating the quality and terms of peace."</i></p>

<p><b>53. Do you suffer any physical illness as a result of stress?</b></p> <p>constantly 22 sometimes 12 not sure 7 occasionally 2 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I definitely know now what the root cause is for my health issues, depression, isolation, stress, and complete loneliness!!"</i></p> <p><i>"During my ten-year marriage to this person I suffered a nervous breakdown, and depression and was hospitalised 3 times for electroconvulsive therapy as a last resort to relieve the deep depression I suffered"</i></p> <p><i>"I have been diagnosed with PTSD, developed shingles through stress, can't work because I had to quit my job when I became sick with depression and haven't been able to work since."</i></p> <p><i>"I can't sleep, I have panic attacks and I constantly obsess over what he will or won't do next, and I see a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a GP to help me cope with the damage he has done."</i></p> <p><i>"I am also a wreck and always feeling depressed and no self-esteem"</i></p> <p><i>"I had a rare tumour on my adrenal gland most likely caused by chronic stress. I almost died, was very ill for months and had my adrenal gland and tumour removed. I am still only back to work part time and in cardiac rehab"</i></p> <p><i>"I actually suffered from a Major Depressive Episode during my marriage, which I have since recovered from, (I have left the marriage) and understand that the percentage of NT spouses who experience a Major Depressive Episode is much higher than that of spouses with NT partners in the general population."</i></p>
<p><b>54. Do you sense your partner's lack of response, unusual movements and/or unusual facial expressions as intimidation?</b></p> <p>constantly 17 sometimes 11 not sure 3 occasionally 2 never 11</p> <p>Total 44</p>	
<p><b>55. Do you live with constant stress?</b></p> <p>constantly 35 sometimes 7 not sure 0 occasionally 2 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I have never experienced stress, misery and utter hopelessness like that of being married and divorced to someone on the autism spectrum. I would not wish this nightmare on anyone and live in hope that it will end soon. My kids are suffering terribly because of his lack of insight, poor communication and bullying behaviour, I just hope and pray that it will end soon"</i></p>

<p><b>56. Do you feel fear?</b></p> <p>constantly 13 sometimes 16 not sure 1 occasionally 9 never 5</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I have a protection order in place. I've told him I'll call the police the next time he goes into a controlled rage or meltdown and shoves me out of the way. He's able to control himself because of this threat."</i></p> <p><i>"But mostly dread"</i></p>
<p><b>57. Do you have unresolved anger about your relationship?</b></p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 10 not sure 2 occasionally 3 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	
<p><b>58. Do you feel you live with domestic abuse and/or violence?</b></p> <p>constantly 19 sometimes 5 not sure 3 occasionally 3 never 14</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"During the ten years I was married to him he isolated me from family and friends, there was financial abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, every type of abuse you can think of except physical abuse."</i></p> <p><i>"I wouldn't mind his Asperger's so much if he weren't so verbally, emotionally and mentally abusive to me."</i></p> <p><i>"After ten years I finally somehow found the courage to end the relationship, but the misery certainly didn't end. It was only the beginning of what was to come, I discovered there is only one thing on this planet that could possibly be worse than being married to an Asperger partner, and that is divorcing one when you have children. That adds a whole new dimension to the nightmare that I thought would end once I was able to leave him, wrong!!! I saw another side to him that never really surfaced during the marriage."</i></p> <p><i>"Since the divorce he bombards me with emails which are nasty, intimidating and harassing monologues written by his father"</i></p> <p><i>"At the time of going to court I did not know he had Asperger's although I strongly suspected it but because he wasn't diagnosed I couldn't use this as evidence that his parenting skills were so appalling"</i></p> <p><i>"Verbal, emotional, mental, but he has occasionally bitten, spit in my face and pushed me"</i></p>

<p><b>59. Do you feel appreciated?</b></p> <p>constantly 0 sometimes 4 not sure 3 occasionally 19 never 18</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“Bringing me gifts and dropping them at my feet like a puppy does not cut it for me. A simple <b>sincere</b> thank you is all that’s needed.”</i></p> <p><i>“Me and my husband have been separated for almost 3 weeks now. I’m trying to spend most of my time with my family and friends and I find it surprising (!!!) and encouraging to see I’m appreciated, that people laugh at my jokes and I can finally be myself and feel loved for who I am.”</i></p>
<p><b>60. Do you feel loved during love making and romance?</b></p> <p>constantly 2 sometimes 6 not sure 3 occasionally 9 never 24</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“No real, sincere romance”</i></p> <p><i>“What I now call “mimicked sex/romance”</i></p> <p><i>“He was never joyous or exuberant about anything and the only tenderness I ever saw him display was toward his dog.”</i></p> <p><i>“Love making with him feels mechanical, brutal and cold.”</i></p>
<p><b>61. Do you have your privacy when needed?</b></p> <p>constantly 13 sometimes 18 not sure 1 occasionally 8 never 4</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“We live like boarders in the same house. Share what we need to, when we need to, about what we need to”</i></p> <p><i>“He spies on me to see what I’m doing all the time. He’s soaking it all up so he can learn what I do and reproduce it later outside.”</i></p>
<p><b>62. Are your belongings respected?</b></p> <p>constantly 17 sometimes 12 not sure 4 occasionally 3 never 8</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“He takes my things without asking and gets angry when I ask for them back.”</i></p>
<p><b>63. Does your partner exhibit unexpected explosive outbursts?</b></p> <p>constantly 15 sometimes 11 not sure 1 occasionally 9 never 8</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>“His AS has disintegrated into an unusual form of Alzheimer’s which baffles the doctors but is obvious to me. His AS symptoms have got worse as he aged.”</i></p>



<p><b>64.</b> Are your attempts to initiate conversation interrupted and wrongly interpreted?</p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 10 not sure 1 occasionally 4 never 1</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"I don't talk to him, anymore, ever"</i></p> <p><i>"I have reflected back through our relationship and kick myself for not recognizing that his "quirks" would affect me so harshly down the road. I now live in his world and he has no clue about mine, nor seems to want to try."</i></p>
<p><b>65.</b> Do you "walk on eggshells" to avoid conflict and keep the peace?</p> <p>constantly 29 sometimes 7 not sure 0 occasionally 5 never 3</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He seemed to change overnight!!! Immediately after the wedding"</i></p> <p><i>"I drew a line in the sand and advised him that I was going to live my life since he is rarely around to do things with me. He takes offense if I ask him to do things around the house. I take care of all financial and household requirements. I wish I didn't.....and I am often on eggshells."</i></p>
<p><b>66.</b> Have you found counselling to be helpful and relevant?</p> <p>constantly 2 sometimes 4 not sure 7 occasionally 8 never 23</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"Therapists, counsellors, psychologists did not believe me. He has a very important job and wears a suit to work. He is able to mask his condition extremely well outside the home."</i></p> <p><i>"After nearly 34 years of being married to my Asperger's husband (and only diagnosed in Dec of 2012), I don't hold much hope for change. I've learned over the years his behavior never ever changes (except to get worse), no learning ever takes place, and any improvements are only temporary or very short-lived"</i></p> <p><i>"I'm sick of being told by professionals he can't help it because that's how his brain is wired. This is not true. He has learned how to ruthlessly use dominating, controlling behaviours in a psychopathic way to always win. He knows how to appear kind and caring in his profession as a doctor but will treat me cold bloodedly, without empathy, to maintain his power at home. Both types of behaviour are insincere and very manipulative."</i></p> <p><i>"The best therapy is talking to someone else who has followed my path into one of these awful relationships."</i></p> <p><i>"Did not know about Asperger's until a friend told me about FAAAS, felt like the site came and put arms around me...read, read, read... So validating..."</i></p> <p><i>"I have seen a number of therapists over the years and only one truly understood what I was going through. She told me I needed a divorce lawyer a lot more than I needed her. I did start down that path but he decompensated to such an extent that my son, his boss, and several other people literally begged me not to go through with it because he was such a mess. Everyone made me feel responsible and like a bad person for abandoning him. I felt so overwhelmed by his begging and pleading for me to come back and the pressure from everyone else that I eventually returned."</i></p>

<p><b>67.</b> Does the phrase: Death by a thousand paper cuts, express how feel in your relationship?</p> <p>constantly 32 sometimes 10 not sure 2 occasionally 0 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	
<p><b>68.</b> Do you think you suffer from Ongoing Traumatic Relationship Syndrome (OTRS)?</p> <p>constantly 28 sometimes 10 not sure 6 occasionally 0 never 0</p> <p>Total 44</p>	<p><i>"He's got the issues...not me!!! Although I am the one that's suffering!"</i></p> <p><i>"I would tell anyone contemplating a relationship with someone on the autism spectrum RUN, RUN, RUN and don't stop until you can no longer see them or hear them or think of them."</i></p> <p><i>"I am just so tired of it and my children too."</i></p> <p><i>"His disability has profoundly changed and hurt me."</i></p> <p><i>"I filed for divorce five months ago after almost 33 years of marriage as symptoms and abuse were worsening and my husband refused to get appropriate help. I still feel traumatized and this (survey) is validating."</i></p>

## **FOOTNOTES:**

Neurotypical (NT) is a term which describes people who meet neurological, physical, social, emotional and cognitive mature milestones and are therefore typically developing.

The social, emotional, intellectual, physical, moral, ethical neuro-developmental evolution occurs throughout a lifetime and is what drives our behaviours and reactions. In the case of High functioning autism/Asperger's, many of the mature developmental milestones are never or rarely reached.

For further information on what the mature milestones for NT adults are, please see the appendix at the end of the footnotes.

## **Survey analysis:**

The disparate maturity in neuro-developmental levels and milestones is clearly obvious by the neurotypical spouse/partner's responses to experiences in these relationships.

**Q 4. Does communication with your partner leave unresolved disputes, unfinished business and unresolved emotional upset?**

All respondents, to varying degrees, described communication and dispute resolution failure to be a significant part of their relationship profile and the corporate life of the household.

**Q 67. Does the phrase: *Death by a thousand paper cuts*, express how you feel in your relationship?**

All respondents, to varying degrees, stated that the phrase expresses how they feel in their relationship. This graphically demonstrates the extreme hardship experienced by neurotypicals in intimate adult relationships with someone who has high functioning autism/Asperger's. The fact this seems to be unknown to the wider community is an even more serious occurrence. It has been said, "*Oil and water do not mix.*" (Prof Tony Attwood). In the case of AS/NT relationships this is indeed obviously true. Disparate neuro-developmental levels between the couple cause misery for the neurotypical partner.

For a detailed explanation of what those neuro-developmental deficits are, refer to the definition of ASD in the DSMV and for a detailed explanation of how those deficits affect the functioning of the person with ASD in adult intimate relationships refer to the following chart.

[Effects of Differing Neuro-developmental Levels on Neurotypical/Autism Spectrum Adult Relationships](#)

**Q 68. Do you think you suffer from Ongoing Traumatic Relationship Syndrome (OTRS)?**

Thirty-eight respondents replied they experienced the negative effects of their relationship, and six were not sure. This strongly recognises the conditions of the relationship as greatly stressful for all respondents.

They experienced physical illness and the normal emotional stress reactions of a complicated extremely dysfunctional relationship. This reaction is called OTRS. It is not a mental illness. The respondents were seduced into believing the pre-relationship persona of their partner was true. Respondents found a different outcome when the façade which concealed the reality of Hfa behaviour was revealed soon after the relationship became cemented.

Respondents own personality and life style was changed dramatically to accommodate the narrow mandates of the partner with ASD. In Question **35 Do you feel more like a parent to your partner?** only one respondent was able to say they never felt like a parent to their partner. Many respondents reported they suffered depression.

- **Q 20 Have you developed feelings of strong anger arising from what you consider to be injustice and false accusations in your relationship?**

Only one respondent replied they did not have anger about the injustice of interactions in the relationship.

- **Q 57. Do you have unresolved anger about your relationship?**  
Only one respondent replied they did not have unresolved anger about their relationship.
- **Q 11. Do you feel loneliness in your relationship?**  
Only one respondent replied they never feel lonely. They seek solace with other partners.
- **Q 27. Do you experience undesired isolation?**  
All respondents, except one, reported feeling isolated.
- **Q 29. Do you lead a controlled, narrow social life?**  
Only two respondents replied their social life has never been narrowed and controlled.
- **Q 16. Do you feel self-doubt?**  
Only two respondents replied they never felt self-doubt.
- **Q 41. Have you lost self-esteem?**  
All respondents have lost self-esteem.
- **Q 2. Do interactions with your partner leave you feeling a loss of sense of self; insecurity or uncertainty of own reality?**  
Only one respondent replied they never felt insecurity or an uncertainty of their own reality.
- **Q 60. Do you feel loved during love making and romance?**  
Only two respondents replied they have warm physical contact and true intimacy.
- **Q 14. Does your partner deny your truth?**  
Only one replied their truth was never denied.
- **Q 65. Do you “walk on eggshells” to avoid conflict and keep the peace?**  
Only three respondents replied they never felt they needed to tread carefully to avoid conflict.
- **Q 47. Do you feel an obligation to solve urgent household disasters alone and for your partner?**  
Only three replied they never felt the obligation to solve urgent problems alone.
- **Q 42. Do you feel unappreciated by your partner?**  
Unanimous agreement the respondents felt unappreciated.
- **Q 66. Have you found counselling helpful and relevant?**

Only two respondents replied constantly. Four replied sometimes. Eight replied occasionally. Twenty-three replied never. By far the most successful form of assistance in understanding what was happening and ways to cope came from sharing experiences with other neurotypical partners: peer to peer mentoring as in SALVE.

**SALVE\*** is Support, Advocacy and Assistance, Listening, Validation, Education by someone who has lived the experience in order to alleviate the symptoms of Ongoing Traumatic Relationship Syndrome (OTRS)

Support for neurotypicals  
 Advocacy for their situation and Assistance dealing with AS spouses/children  
 Listening to and believing them  
 Validation of what they have experienced  
 Education about ASD and how it impacts them

One of two respondents who replied “constantly” to question Q 66 received counselling by a war veteran psychologist...the constant domestic abuse, coercive control by neglect, dismissal, humiliation, ignoring, belittling, explosive outbursts has been likened to living in a war zone.

**Q 46. Do you feel an obligation to prompt your partner or to fulfil their neglected duties?**

Three replied never.

**Q 48. Do you feel an obligation to remind and prompt your partner with cues about everyday situations?**

Two replied never.

Those respondents out of a relationship or in long term relationships reported prompting their partner less as a result of sharing their experience and receiving SALVE through support groups and talking to others in the same situation. They use active resistance and don't micro manage their own behaviour or the behaviour of their AS partner as they realise the futility of the endeavour. However, they still suffer the consequences of whatever takes place within or outside the household.

Many professionals currently recommend micro-managing by following “to-do” lists as a strategy to “improve” the relationship. When a neurotypical partner arrives at professional counselling they've already tried anything and everything to make the unworkable relationship work. Resistance is used by other neurotypicals in their own fashion e.g. having their own bedroom and space or separate social outings. This does not minimise the pain and grief of the incongruent relationship. They still suffer the normal stress responses of Ongoing Traumatic Relationship Syndrome. (OTRS)

**Q 47. Do you feel an obligation to solve urgent household disasters alone and for your partner?**

Those respondents who have learned to protect and regain themselves by disconnecting and refusing to take up the slack had all been talking to and sharing experiences with other spouses in the same situation: those living with ASD partners. This strategy provided comfort and support for them, unlike their negative experiences with professional therapists and counsellors, who require compromise including couples counselling when compromise is not possible.

***Q 37: Do inconsistent messages of love characterise your relationship?***

All participants felt inconsistent messages of love.

Intermittent reinforcement is when one person in a relationship metes out or reinforces rules, rewards or boundaries occasionally or inconsistently. Instead of discouraging the other person, intermittent reinforcement actually does the opposite. It fuels the recipient's attempts to extract the reward once again, keeping them hopelessly locked onto the relationship.

***Q 7. Is there spontaneous intimate connection such as "pillow talk", real friendship, loving foreplay in your relationship?***

Only one respondent replied constantly.

***Q 60. Do you feel loved during love making and romance?***

Only two respondents replied constantly

There is none or very little spontaneous, sincere loving physical and emotional contact in the vast majority of these marriages/partnerships. The essential ingredient in a marriage partnership is the intimate physical and emotional connection. It is unique and exclusive. When that connection is not there the relationship connection becomes extinct. Loneliness, solitary activities, strict routine, lack of being appreciated, lack of genuine physical warmth and tenderness crush the spirit of the neurotypical.

***Q 38. Do you feel a loss of trust in your partner?***

Only three replied they have not lost trust.

Without complete trust there is no real relationship as one partner is unable to completely relax with the other party.

***Q 25. Are you affected by family violence and or abuse?***

Twenty-two replied never.

**Q 58. Do you feel you live with domestic abuse and/or violence?**

Fourteen replied never.

There is a perplexing contradiction between the number of respondents who answered never to these two questions and the much higher number of respondents who answered they experienced the following interaction, behaviours from their partners.

- **Q 23. Is there a dismissal by your partner of your concerns and reality?**  
All replied they were affected by a dismissal of their concerns and reality.
- **Q 56. Do you feel fear?**  
Only five replied they never feel fear in the relationship.
- **Q 14 Does your partner deny your truth?**  
Only one replied their truth is never denied.
- **Q 15 Do you feel gas-lighted, manipulated into doubting your own truth and your sanity?**  
Only one respondent replied they never felt manipulated into doubting their sanity.
- **Q 43 Do you feel manipulated and used by your partner to solely meet his or her needs?**  
Only two replied they never felt manipulated to meet the needs solely of their partner.
- **Q 3. Are your emotions acknowledged, validated and respected by your partner?**  
All respondents experienced disrespect, non-acknowledgment and invalidation of their emotions.
- **Q 1. Are your perspectives, interests & needs taken into consideration by your partner?**  
All experienced having their perspectives, interests and needs not being taken into consideration by their partner. Their needs and perspectives did not matter.
- **Q 5. Are there ever mutually satisfactory resolutions to everyday problems or situations?**  
Only one respondent replied they constantly had a satisfactory resolution to everyday problems and situations.
- **Q 42. Do you feel unappreciated by your partner?**  
**Q 59 Do you feel appreciated?**  
All felt they were not appreciated.
- **Q 24. Do you feel intimidated & humiliated during interactions with your partner?**

Only one replied they never felt intimidated and humiliated.

- **Q 8. Do you have a mutual process for redress and receive “natural justice” when you feel you’ve been wronged?**  
Only one replied they experienced “natural justice” when they felt wronged.
- **Q 37. Do inconsistent messages of love characterise your relationship?**  
No one experienced consistent messages of love.
- **Q 22. Do you feel you are living in insufficient or unsafe conditions?**  
Seven replied they never felt they were living in unsafe or insufficient circumstances.
- **Q 63. Does your partner exhibit unexpected explosive outbursts?**  
Eight replied they never experienced unexpected explosive outbursts from their partner.

There is obviously a need for recognition that Domestic Violence is not just physical abuse. It is social, emotional, economic, sexual, psychological as well as physical. Whether intended or not, the consequences of abusive behaviours have the same negative result on the recipient. Consider these recent definitions of Domestic Violence/abuse and Coercive Control.

### **Types of intimate partner violence** (Australia)

**Physical** - If someone is hurting you, or threatening to hurt you, a loved one or a pet, then you will need to take some action.

**Emotional** - Some types of emotional abuse can include:

- **Verbal** - yelling, insulting or swearing at someone
- **Rejection** - pretending not to notice someone’s presence, conversation or value
- **Put downs** - name calling, public embarrassment, calling someone stupid, blaming them for everything
- **Being afraid** - causing someone to feel afraid, intimidated or threatened
- **Isolation** - limiting freedom of movement, stopping someone from contacting other people (like friends or family)
- **Money** - controlling someone’s money, withholding money, preventing someone from working, stealing or taking money
- **Bullying**- purposely and repeatedly saying or doing hurtful things to someone.

Though physical violence is often seen as being more serious than emotional abuse, this is not the case. The scars of emotional abuse are real and long lasting. Emotional abuse can leave a person feeling depressed, anxious and even suicidal, as well as having a negative impact on self-esteem and confidence.



**Economic** - Having money and being able to make decisions about it, is one means of being independent. If someone is controlling your money, keeping you financially dependent, or making you ask for money unreasonably, then this is a form of violence

**Social** – Social violence occurs in relationships that often include other forms of violence. If someone is insulting you or teasing you in front of other people, keeping you isolated from family and friends, controlling what you do and where you go, then they are being violent.

**Spiritual** - This type of violence involves a situation where you are not allowed to have your own opinions about religion, cultural beliefs, and values, or your spirituality is manipulated to keep you feeling powerless.

*Being violent to another human being is a denial of that person's human rights, which governments have a responsibility to protect under international law.*

[www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/ What is domestic violence? | ReachOut.com Australia](http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/What%20is%20domestic%20violence%20%7C%20ReachOut.com%20Australia)

**Coercive control** is the emotional and psychological abuse of a partner, through threats and restrictions, as well as physical violence. The introduction of a law against coercive control in 2015 followed a Home Office (Britain) consultation, in which 85 per cent of participants said the existing law did not provide enough protection to victims. The law can help victims achieve justice and will hopefully instigate cultural change around this lesser-known side of domestic abuse. It leads to a number of questions, where people in unhappy relationships may start to wonder whether their partner's behaviour falls under **emotional abuse**. That's why we asked Polly Neate, chief executive of national domestic violence charity **Women's Aid**, to explain what constitutes coercive control - and where the line falls in any relationship.

**It's more than just one argument.** Emotional abuse happens over a sustained period of time, where the perpetrator repeatedly controls their victim. "It's a pattern in the relationship, where one partner is controlling and there's an ongoing sense of fear." explains Polly Neate.

**An abuser wants to scare their victim** "With domestic violence, (usually male) partners behave in a way that's designed to intimidate, frighten or coerce their victim's behaviour," says Neate. When a victim is frightened of their partner and treads on eggshells out of fear of their reaction, that's a problem. [it's abuse] if you feel frightened of your partner and you're worrying about the consequences of what externally might be relatively minor things, if he gets angry at the slightest thing, if you have to do everything his way, if you're worried and feel like your behaviour will 'set him off'. It has a big impact on you."

**It's a one-way street only:** In a healthy relationship, equality is present. If one person has particular needs, they accept that their partner will also have their own needs. But an abuser will not think about their partner, and generally puts themselves first.

“It doesn’t go the other way,” says Neate. “There’s no consideration that you’re upset. Perpetrators of domestic violence do it because they feel entitled to behave that way. They think their partner is there to meet to their needs and they’re entitled to take whatever they want.”

**Pretending nothing ever happened: ‘Gas lighting’** is when someone exhibits abusive behaviour and then pretends it didn’t happen – or even switches blame on to the victim. It’s also common among psychological abusers. “It can be very confusing,” says Neate. “It can cause serious problems when a woman starts to doubt herself. That’s very difficult to get your head around as a survivor. It takes a woman a long time to recognise that the nice behaviour and abusive behaviour are both a conscious decision on the behalf of the perpetrator.”

**Unhappiness doesn’t matter:** In a healthy relationship, if one person tells their partner just how unhappy they are with their behaviour (the partner) may be upset, annoyed or both. But they will eventually get over it. Neate explains that an abuser will not react that way.

“A perpetrator is unwilling ever to listen to why you’re unhappy and will often minimise what has happened. If they’re not willing to do any work towards your relationship that would be really concerning, as would being too scared to talk about it in the first place. All of us in relationships mess up sometimes and don’t behave appropriately. If you’re frightened and worried and feel like you have to give up on the things that are important to you in order to make your partner OK, and to avoid his bad behaviour, that’s where the line is.”

**Controlling in many ways** Neate explains that control is a significant factor in psychological abuse, and a perpetrator can exact it in a number of ways, such as not letting their partner go out or visit friends and family. It can also be financial, with a perpetrator controlling their victim’s money, or it can be a case of the abuser not wanting to ever socialise. Control can also extend to the online realm - with tracking software used on smartphones or email and social media accounts hacked.

**Personal attacks:** There doesn’t have to be any physical violence for someone to be guilty of domestic abuse. It’s not just about bruises. Often it can simply involve words, where a perpetrator might make comments designed to emotionally manipulate his victim. Polly Neate says: “[it is abuse] if he or she puts you down and tells you you’re stupid and unattractive, that no one else will love you. Even if it seems to be done in a kind way, it’s still emotional abuse.”

**Abuse doesn’t just come in the form of bruises**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/coercive-control-how-can-you-tell-whether-your-partner-is-emotio/>

## Appendix

Neurotypical (NT) is a term which describes people who meet neurological and cognitive milestones and are therefore typically developing.

Basic developmental levels, stages, milestones, or capacities lay a foundation for all our learning and development. Neurotypicals (NT) master these skills relatively easily. The neuro-biological developmental conditions of autism/Hfa make the mastery more difficult.

Some of these skills are in areas of critical thinking, cognitive, intellectual, social, emotional, language and motor skills, as well as a sense of self.

People on the autism spectrum tend to have an uneven profile of abilities with peaks and troughs, unlike neurotypical people who tend to have an even profile of ability. This is important to remember when thinking about giftedness, as even someone with extraordinary abilities may still experience enormous challenges because of their autism.

People on the autism spectrum struggle with the kinds of “social intuition” neurotypical people use. Unlike neurotypical people, they do not intuitively learn the social skills required for interacting with others. People on the autism spectrum often display an uneven pattern of abilities. They may score below average in some areas of cognitive ability, such as verbal skills or adaptive behaviour skills, but score in the average range or above average in others, for example rote memory or non-verbal skills.

Autism can occur by itself or in association with other disorders such as intellectual disability, anxiety disorders, ADHD, OCD, Tourette’s, learning disability, epilepsy, Tuberous Sclerosis, mood disorders, sleep disorders, eating disorders, and others such as bi-polar.

### Mature Developmental Milestones

Neurotypicals:

- know themselves
- can string together a series of actions, words, ideas to communicate their intentions to another person.
- know themselves in terms of ideas
- picture themselves and others together in their minds.
- generate ideas and tell the world about them with their words.
- grow more complex each day
- are logical, cohesive, thinking people.
- have an expanding complex sense of self
- new experience stirs their interests and capabilities in new directions
- millions of daily interactions, smiles, glances, every question further builds a sense of self

- continually layer on additional cognitive, intellectual, emotional and social skills to serve them throughout their life.
- self regulates
- is interested in the wider world
- is able to navigate and sustain intimacy, engagement and falling in love
- able to conduct a two-way conversation
- uses complex verbal and non-verbal communication
- nurtures and understands emotional ideas
- able to combine emotional and logical thinking
- uses multi causal and triangular thinking investing emotion into more than one possibility
- understands family dynamics and the roles of various people, such as parent.
- understand family dynamics in terms of relationships among different people, rather than just in terms of whether they get their own needs met.
- use Grey-area, Emotionally-Differentiated Thinking (Greenspan)
- understanding of varying degrees and relative influence of things,
- able to weigh factors and relative influences
- find new ways to solve problems and compromise.
- has a sense of self and ability for reflection on their own internal standard
- judges their own and others experience
- able to rate their own behaviour
- rate the behaviour of others
- make inferences
- think in more than one frame of reference at a time.
- can create new ideas from existing ones,
- can consider both the past and the future.
- a level of intelligence and mature thinking.
- continue to develop throughout life
- have an expanded sense of self that includes family and community relationships
- have the ability to reflect on one's future
- have a stable, separate sense of self
- able to navigate intimacy and commitment (including long-term commitments such as marriage, home ownership and a career)
- understands parenthood and other nurturing roles
- broadening perspectives on time, space, the life cycle and the larger world

- has a sense of responsibility to the environment and future generations, along with a sense of perspective on ones' place in the grand scheme of things.
- display and use Emotional Intelligence (Goleman)
- have Self-awareness
- ability to recognize and understand their own personal moods and emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others
- self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a self-deprecating sense of humour.
- ability to monitor one's own emotion state and to correctly identify and name one's emotions.
- realistic self-assessment
- Self-regulate
- ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods,
- propensity to suspend judgment and to think before acting. Hallmarks include trustworthiness and integrity; comfort with ambiguity; and openness to change
- Internal motivation
- A passion to work for internal reasons that go beyond money and status -which are external rewards, - such as an inner vision of what is important in life, a joy in doing something, curiosity in learning, a flow that comes with being immersed in an activity.
- A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence. Hallmarks include a strong drive to achieve, optimism even in the face of failure, and organizational commitment.
- Empathy includes, or leads to, sympathy, which implies concern, or care or a wish to soften negative emotions or experiences in others.
- ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people
- skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions. Hallmarks include expertise in building and retaining relationships, cross-cultural sensitivity, service to others without thought of return.
- shows compassion
- proficient social skills
- Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, and an ability to find common ground and build rapport. Hallmarks of social skills include effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, expertise building and leading others.

[www.icdl.com/DIR/6-developmental-milestoneswww.sonoma.edu/users/s/swijtink/teaching/...101/.../goleman.htm](http://www.icdl.com/DIR/6-developmental-milestoneswww.sonoma.edu/users/s/swijtink/teaching/...101/.../goleman.htm)

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