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# look me in the eye: my life with asperger's

By John Elder Robison

Foreword by Augusten Burroughs, Robison's  
brother  
and author of *Running with Scissors*

“Robison’s thoughtful and thoroughly memorable account of living with Asperger’s syndrome is assured of media attention (and sales) due in part to his brother Augusten Burroughs’s brief but fascinating description of Robison in *Running with Scissors*. But Robison’s story is much more fully detailed in this moving memoir, beginning with his painful childhood, his abusive alcoholic father, and his mentally disturbed mother. . . . Robison succeeds in his goal of ‘helping those who are struggling to grow up or live with Asperger’s’ to see how it ‘is not a disease’ but ‘a way of being’ that needs no cure except understanding and encouragement from others.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“Affecting, on occasion surprisingly comic memoir about growing up with Asperger’s syndrome. . . . The view from inside this little-understood disorder offers both cold comfort and real hope, which makes it an exceptionally useful contribution to the literature.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“I hugely enjoyed reading *Look Me in the Eye*. This book is a wild roller-coaster ride through John Robison’s life—from troubled teenage prankster to successful employment in electronics, music, and classic cars. A kindly professor introduced him to electrical engineering, which led to jobs where he found techie soul mates that were like him. A fascinating glimpse into the mind of an engineer, which should be on the reading list of everyone who is interested in the human mind.” —**Temple Grandin**, author of *Thinking in Pictures* and *Animals in Translation*

“*Look Me in the Eye* is a wonderful surprise on so many levels: it is compassionate, funny, and deeply insightful. By the end, I realized my vision of the world had undergone a slight but permanent alteration; I had taken for granted that our behavioral conventions were meaningful, when in fact they are arbitrary. That he is able to illuminate something so simple (but hidden, and unalterable) proves that John Elder Robison is at least as good a writer as he is an engineer, if not better” —**Haven Kimmel**, author of *A Girl Named Zippy*

“John Robison’s book is an immensely affecting account of a life lived according to his gifts rather than his limitations. His story provides ample evidence for my belief that individuals on the autistic spectrum are just as capable of rich and productive lives as anyone else.”

—**Daniel Tammet**, author of *Born on a Blue Day*

**LOOK ME IN THE EYE: My Life with Asperger’s** (Crown; September 25, 2007) is John Elder Robison’s extraordinarily moving and slyly funny story of growing up with Asperger’s syndrome (a type of high-functioning autism) at a time when the diagnosis simply didn’t exist. As a child, and with no inkling of how to pass for “normal,” John tried to make friends by petting other children with sticks—not a strategy that went over very well. He seldom met anyone’s gaze, struggled with the simplest social interactions, and was constantly told to “wipe that strange look off his face” by teachers and other adults. Feeling like a freak, he dropped out of high school at sixteen and took refuge in his savant-like abilities with machines.

In these pages, Robison also provides a fascinating reverse angle on the younger brother he left behind, at the mercy of their nutty parents—the boy who would later change his name from Chris Robison to Augusten Burroughs and write the bestselling memoir *Running with Scissors*. Burroughs has written a marvelous foreword to this book.

Amazingly, despite his lifelong struggles to communicate, John is a born storyteller. He moves effortlessly from dark comedy to keen insights into the human mind. Many of the scenes in this book—from the tale of how he killed a water moccasin with a revolver on the patio of a rundown hotel on a rock 'n' roll tour with KISS, to his attempts to convince his little brother that Cleveland is a religious community populated by “Clevites” who worship “Saint Cleve, the patron saint of harvests” (chapter 15)—are unforgettable. And after reading about how John puzzles over small talk (chapter 20), you’ll never see a simple “How are you?” in quite the same way.

The number of children and adults being diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome is skyrocketing, and the parents of those children—as well as adults with Asperger’s—are hungry for insight into this condition. John’s memoir stands out among other such books because he traveled such a dark and winding path and has arrived at such a satisfying place: married, the father of a seventeen-year-old son, and the owner of a hugely successful business repairing and restoring fine European automobiles. After a lifetime of feeling like a fraud, John has learned to compensate for his weaknesses and to identify himself proudly as an “Aspergian.”

Written in spare yet heartfelt prose, **LOOK ME IN THE EYE** is a genuinely inspiring story of overcoming enormous odds.

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**About the Author:**

For the past fifteen years, John Elder Robison has run an independent automobile repair business, J E Robison Service, specializing in Mercedes, BMW, Jaguar, Land Rover, Rolls Royce, and Bentley motorcar work. His company is known nationwide for its restoration and customization work, and he proudly identifies himself as a “machine aficionado.” He and his wife live next door to his brother, Augusten Burroughs, in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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My Life with Asperger’s**

By John Elder Robison

The Crown Publishing Group

Publication Date: September 25, 2007

ISBN: 978-0-307-39598-6

Hardcover; \$25.95

[www.crownpublishing.com](http://www.crownpublishing.com)

For more information please visit [www.johnrobison.com](http://www.johnrobison.com).

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