

# UNDERSTANDING The SPECTRUM

Introduced  
by Archie! ↻



Language can be  
confusing for me.

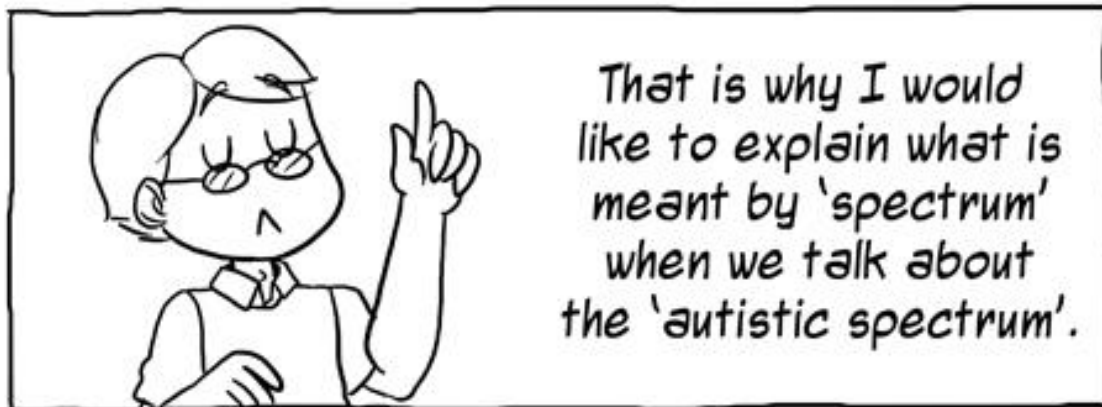
It takes me longer than  
the average person to process  
conversations.

And although I am good at  
making conversation, it can take  
me longer than normal to respond.

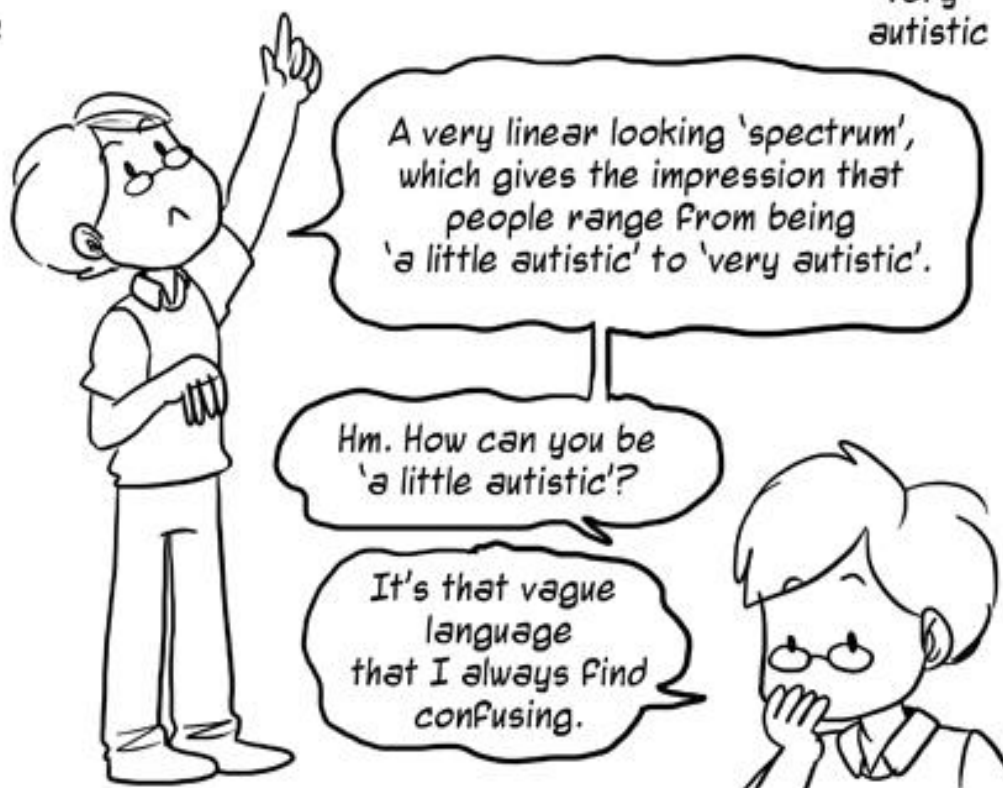
But, neurotypical  
people find  
language  
confusing too.  
And it can lead  
to some people  
misperceiving  
who I am.



I hear a lot of people misinterpreting or misusing the term 'autism spectrum'. So for Autism Acceptance week, I decided to make a comic to help explain the term and how it affects things. Archie is one of the reasons I became so interested/knowledgeable in autism (I like to go all out in research when I write characters for comics 'n such) so he's the one presenting everything!



Sometimes when people think of this word, they think of the autism spectrum as being like this:



The problem with thinking of the spectrum in this way, is that a perception of an autistic person also becomes linear.



You're only a little autistic, Archie.

Hm. I still don't understand, can you be less vague?

You're able to have a normal conversation with me and act pretty normal! You're not severely autistic.

Not autistic

Very autistic

...And so you see, if someone thinks you're on a 'low end' of this spectrum, this often happens:



Archie you can handle all of this just fine, you're not *that* autistic.



**NEW Situations**  
**TOO MUCH NOISE**  
**LACK of ROUTINE**  
**'SMART' tight clothing**  
**DON'T STIM**  
**loads of conversations all at once**  
**DON'T FIDGET**  
**BE MORE ORGANIZED!**



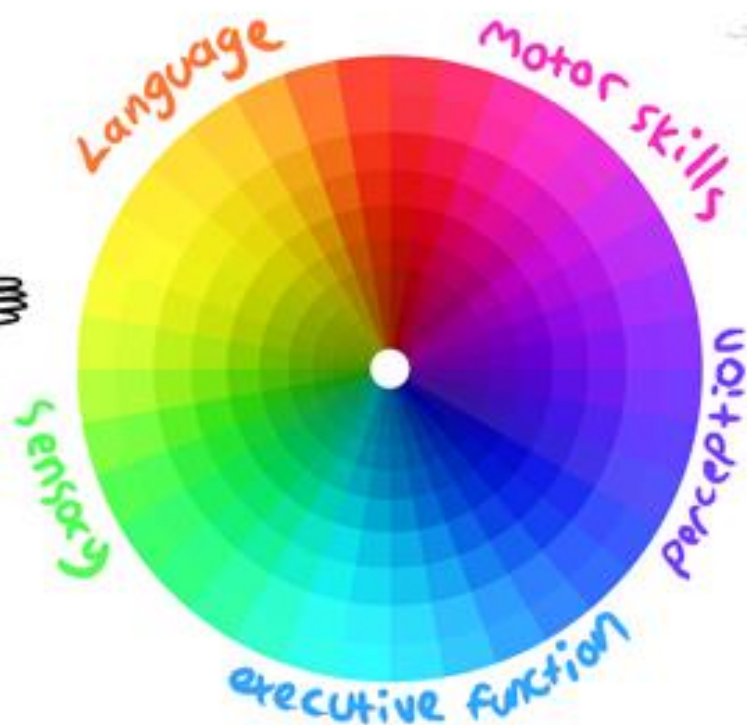
And if you're seen as being on the 'high end' of this spectrum-

I'm gonna re-label you on this spectrum... Since you're very autistic I don't think you should have a job, just to be safe y'know?

It can lead to some people labeling you as being incapable of doing anything at all.



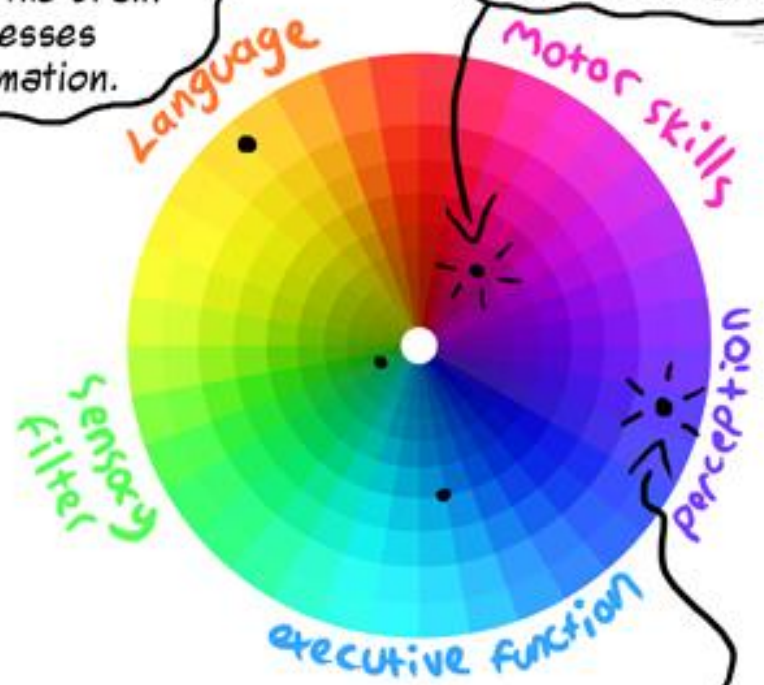
The truth is though, someone who is neurodiverse in some areas of their brain, will also be no different to your average person in other areas of their brain.



You see, the autistic spectrum looks something more like this.

The spectrum consists of many different 'traits', or ways in which the brain processes information.

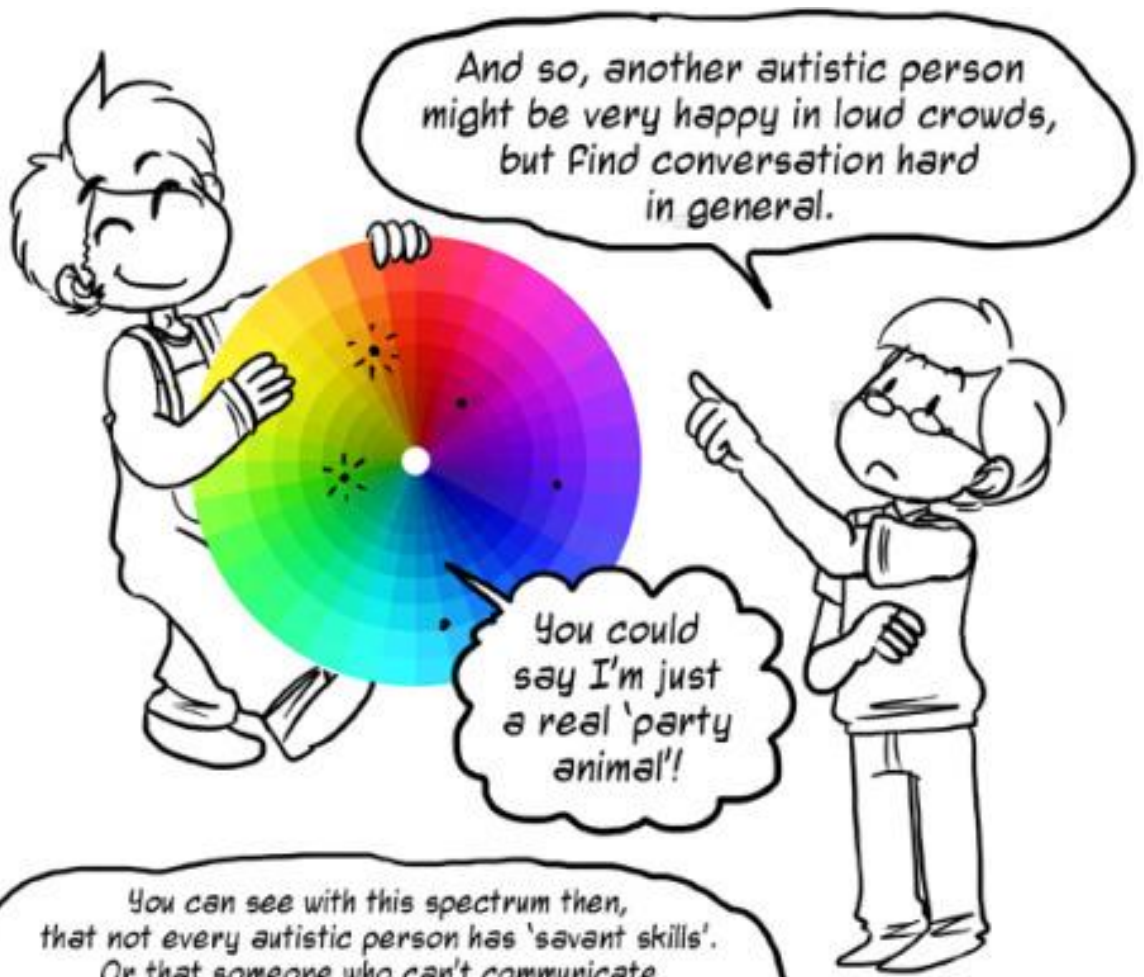
Some traits create difficulties in every day life. (hence being diagnosed)



But also many traits are useful in every day life.



Each person with autism will have a set of traits all in different areas of the spectrum. The areas where they don't have a trait will function no differently to a neurotypical brain, but may be affected by circumstances. In example, I am good at making conversation (language). But I get sensory overload in loud and crowded spaces, which then makes conversation very hard for me.



You can see with this spectrum then, that not every autistic person has 'savant skills'. Or that someone who can't communicate verbally might still understand what you're saying, but just need a different way to communicate, such as sign language.





Sometimes, if someone is diagnosed as being 'on the spectrum', and informs another person of this, it's so that they can get some understanding and respect for the things they are unable to do. *But*, it is also so that they can cooperate with the world around them- so that they can be the best in the things they *can* do.

I hope that in the future, people will better understand the term 'spectrum', and continue to respect the differences *and* similarities we all share in how we experience the world.

