

# Sam's Asperger Book

The title 'Sam's Asperger Book' is written in a large, bold, yellow font with a dark brown outline. The letters are slightly slanted and have a 3D effect, with a shadow cast below them. The shadow is a darker, semi-transparent version of the text, creating a sense of depth. The word 'Asperger' is particularly prominent in the center.

by Sam Watt

My name is Sam Watt. My birthday is 7<sup>th</sup> July 1998.

I was born in Brisbane.

We lived in Brisbane for a while then we moved to Moranbah. Then we went back to Brisbane for five years. I was about 7 when I left Brisbane and went to Moranbah for good.

Then...after 2 years we moved to Netherdale.

The schools I've been to are North Lakes School, Moranbah and Finch Hatton. The best things about Northlakes were the oval and my friends, Zac and Ty.

Some of the best things about Moranbah were my friends. Their names are Caleb, Angus, Matt and Will. The other good thing about Moranbah was Miss Kettle, she was very nice and Miss Fillery. Miss Fillery was the first person, besides mum, to suspect that I had a disorder.

Now that I'm at Finch Hatton the best things are Jai, my friend, and the autism room (that's what I'll call it for this book) and Mrs Smith for a teacher.

## Something Else About Me.

Another thing about me is that I have ASD. Most of the time I can't tell people how I am thinking or feeling. This is a problem at school. There are times when I just can't do work.

ASD isn't a disease, anybody's fault or something that means I am bad.

It is called a neurological disorder because it affects my brain. This means that my thinking is different to other people. But it shows to other people as behaviour. ASD is also called a sensory disorder because I feel my senses differently to most people.

I have behaviours that I'd like people to know about so they will understand me better.

When I was little I didn't smile or talk. I had to have help from a Speech Language Pathologist to teach me to speak.

I like most things to stay the same. This means that if there is a change I might not be able to accept it. For example, if there is a new teacher I can close up and not want to communicate or work. I want them to know about me and the ASD and then I feel more understood.

I also like eating dinner to stay the same. I have to have the same food that I always like.

At home I had to have picture charts to help me with routines.

I focus on my special interests and can't think about anything else.

Some of my special interests are electronic games, other things such as cricket, French cricket, the colour black, pancakes, cakes and games.

Some of the ways my senses might be different to other people are:

When everything is quiet there is a buzz in my head. That's why I like sounds around me. The noises that bother me are laughing and yelling. I also don't enjoy most music except for background music.

I don't like the feeling of tags, zippers, jeans, jumpers, someone kissing me, people bumping into me, being tapped on the shoulder, dirt and unclean stuff. If I have to put garbage in the bin I need to wear gloves. I hate long sleeve stuff and trousers. I can stand cold weather better than other people.

I see things other people might not notice like spinning things such as the ceiling fans, flying things like birds. I like to stare at my favourite things for a long time. I don't like some carpet because I can see tiny little dots so I look away.

I find it difficult to understand what a person is saying when I have to look in their eyes. I want to say to them that “I am listening but I can’t look at you right now”. I can understand people’s face expressions and body language a little bit.

I like to smell some deodorants, not crystal because they have no smell.

Some deodorants smell bad to me. I like the smell of watermelon and mango. I always smell food before I eat it and if I like the smell of it I will try it. I like the smell of beef noodles. I do not like the way poo smells or dust smells. I hate mice smell.

I like the flavour of some food, how it tastes. I am a fussy eater. It has to be my decision whether I eat what my parents tell me to eat.

I have a high tolerance to pain. Needles are something that I don’t like. My weakness is needles. I thought they were trying to kill me. I rarely feel pain. I could have an injury and not notice the pain.

I worry a lot about germs. I don’t touch bottles, any garbage or old food. When we have to clean food off the dishes I just leave the dishwashing job. Even if mum said I couldn’t have my Xbox 360 playing time I still couldn’t touch it. If Mum rinses the dirty dishes then I can wash up.

I need to do movement to feel comfortable. I like to walk in circles and jiggle my right leg. In class my teacher has let me have a swivel chair and this is helping me in class. I move for different reasons. Sometimes I'm bored. Sometimes I don't have anything else to do. I might feel anxious so moving helps me relax and feel better. It is also a habit – I have done it for a long time. It also just feels good. I have trouble with jumping up and down sports.

I hate music. I do like the music in the background of my electronic Games. If there is no sound or music I can't keep playing or watching it.

I don't like art activities. I don't like glue or paint – they are messy and sticky.

I am a natural at playing computer games. I can figure out how to play them really quickly. I like to visit different Web sites on the Internet. I would like to learn how to make games.

I never know when a person will do something or look different than before. People can be unpredictable and puzzling. Sometimes I like being with people and sometimes I prefer to be alone. I feel very uncomfortable at the start with new people. I do not like new teachers in my class or a new student in my class. I do not like children sitting next to me at lunch. I do not like going to a new class. I do not like parents to come into my class. I feel angry when there are changes.

I am afraid of anyone bigger than me unless I know them. Even when my parents say it's OK I am still afraid of new people. I think Finch Hatton is fairly safe.

## School Subjects

Maths - Sam will not use paper to work out maths problems. He believes it is cheating.

English - Sam is quite good at English. He reads Beast Quest and Deltora Quest series of books. He is very interested in Science Fiction.

Science - Sam isn't interested in this at all. He can't say why this is.

Sose - Sam isn't sure what this is.

LOTE - No interest but stays in the class.

Physical Education - He does this. Sam likes T-Ball

Music - Doesn't like it. Sam liked the teacher who did music.

Art/craft - Sam prefers to help others by giving them paint etc.

## Tuning Out

Tuning out is like taking a break for me. I might be paying more attention to thoughts and feelings inside of me. I don't close my eyes because there are voices coming everywhere and I don't know who they are so I keep my eyes open. Sometimes my brain is stiff dead – it's hard to think. It doesn't matter what people try like giving me lollies or computer time I just can't do work. I try to just shut my brain off to feel better. I half close my eyes and put my head on my desk.

## Understanding me.

My mum really understands me. My teacher Mrs Smith understands me. Miss Collett understands me the most and helps me understand myself. There is nothing for kids to know really.

## Friends.

Sometimes I want to go to a friend's house. Sometimes I would rather play by myself at home. Sometimes I want a friend to come to my house. I might tell a friend that I have ASD.

I feel like students at school are "enemy", "neutral" or "ally". The girls are the only ones who are neutral. I have got two allies at this school – an ally is my friend. The boys annoy me when they are trying to be cool in class and in the playground. If people bully me I like to bully back. If I wasn't worried about getting in trouble, I'd punch up everyone who annoys me.

I have different feelings about playing with people. I mostly like to play with boys of either the same age or older. I also like to play with adults, especially "Connect Four" with Mrs Smith. Then sometimes I prefer not to be with anyone at all and play by myself. I have a particular friend here at Finch Hatton. His name is Jhai. When we are together I mostly just do what he does. I also think Clayton is my friend. He doesn't talk about computers. He is into motorbikes. I don't like motorbikes at all. I can talk to him about what happened on the weekend or anything.

Communicating.

I like to know everything that is happening in my home. I like to listen to what they are saying.

At school I only want to sit next to my friends at lunch breaks. I don't like eating time only because people sit next to me. I find it hard to figure out when to talk to other people. I would rather do something else instead of talking. Sometimes talking with children can be stressful and confusing. It is not always fun. It is more fun for me to play my game – X-Box. When Jhai is with me at my house we can talk about computers. If I am playing a game at lunchtime with the other students I can talk about the game and sometimes I tell people what to do.

I can communicate with my family and with my class teacher and the special needs teacher. Sometimes other people say things that I don't agree with. It makes me angry. This happened when a man came to class to tell us about bullying. I listened to him but I didn't agree with him. My dad tells me to hit back but this man said not to.

There are times when I don't want to talk at all. I don't know the reason for this. When I talk it is usually talk in a monotone voice. I like to talk to Jhai and Mrs Smith. I will talk to Miss Collett. But I really just want to talk to Jhai about computers and X-box. I do not want to talk about measurement and school work and other stuff.

I understand that there are things that I shouldn't say to another person even if they are true. To be polite is to be considerate of another person's feelings. The things I would never say to anyone are about them being poor and not being able to afford a computer or if they are no good at computers or X-Box. I have learnt to say things in my head instead of out loud.

## Thoughts.

Thoughts are what I see or hear or feel in my mind. Other people have thoughts in their minds too. Everyone's thoughts are usually different to everyone else. I have thoughts in my mind which go over and over. I think of the words "just totally, just totally, just totally to though".

I understand that hopes are thoughts. I hope that I can make games for the computer, that I don't have so many stiff brain days and that Dad can fix my X-box if it breaks. I can tell my hopes to Jhai and Dad.

I understand that fears are thoughts. Everyone has fears sometimes. They can make me feel afraid or worried. I usually will go very quiet if I feel afraid or worried. I know I can talk to someone like Mum and Dad, Jhai or Miss Collett.

I am one of the ASD students who have lots of imagination. I like to pretend. Sometimes I might pretend so much that I forget that I am in the real world.

I know that no one else knows my thoughts so I have to tell people what is in my mind. I might want to talk about it or let them know what is going on in my thoughts such as feeling worried.

## Feelings.

Some people with ASD do not show their emotions on their faces. I think I am like this most of the time. People looking at me won't know how I am feeling. Even though I don't show them I still feel emotions.

I find it puzzling when people ask me questions like "How do you feel about this?"

These are words I understand for naming how I feel;

- Withdrawn
- Sad
- Bored
- Angry
- Worried
- Anxious
- Frustrated
- Happy

When I feel anxious I will go very very quiet. It can happen when

- there is too much happening at the same time,
- something is not the way it's supposed to be,
- I don't want to do something different,
- I feel sick,
- I don't understand something,
- I don't know what to do
- I want to be alone.

When I am anxious I say "I don't want to". It is because I can't do what they want me to do. If they see me being very very quiet they will know that I feel anxious. It wouldn't matter what they tried to give me I just couldn't do what they want me to do. I feel anxious about the rubbish because of the germs. I'm not sure if mum and dad understand this. The gloves have helped and show that I can do chores when asked.

Miss Collett has explained the term oppositional to me. I can be oppositional a lot. Often I want to do things differently than what my parents say. Or I get oppositional when I am anxious or upset and I need to be left alone.

If I am feeling sad I can't do schoolwork or eat my lunch.

I think about it but I don't try to hurt, hit, scratch or pinch other people. If I am pushed too hard I will retaliate against them or I will think about doing it.

There are two ways I can think of that can help me get calmer. They are reducing the sensory stimulation such as going somewhere alone and giving me opportunities for my special interest which is my computer and X-Box. Playing my computer makes me feel calm.

I understand that being healthy can help me to handle stress. I have a fairly good diet. I eat;

- Beans
- Peas
- Watermelon
- Chicken
- Salami
- Bacon
- Ham
- Banana
- Corn
- Scrambled and fried Eggs
- Baked Beans
- Spaghetti
- Noodles
- Toast
- Cheese if it is grated
- Potato chips
- Milk
- Chocolate mousse
- Some junk food for treats

Some people with ASD have a very restrictive diet and so they don't get the energy they need from food.

## Conclusion.

Thank you for reading about me. I just want people to understand me a little better so that they know I'm not being naughty every time I can't do schoolwork or can't play games with the other students. I think I am smart enough to catch up with my work when I don't have a stiff brain or anxiousness. I'm not sure that I will ever change about being friends. Miss Collett has known some ASD people at High School who started out with no friends but as they got used to the school and the people in it they started to choose people to hang around with. One of the people chosen was another student who had ASD. They really understood each other and were great friends. They are still great friends even though they have left school.

## Me in the Future.

I can't imagine what High School will be like. I hope to be the person that people come to if they need help with their computer games.

I want to be a computer fixer in a company that people come to for help.