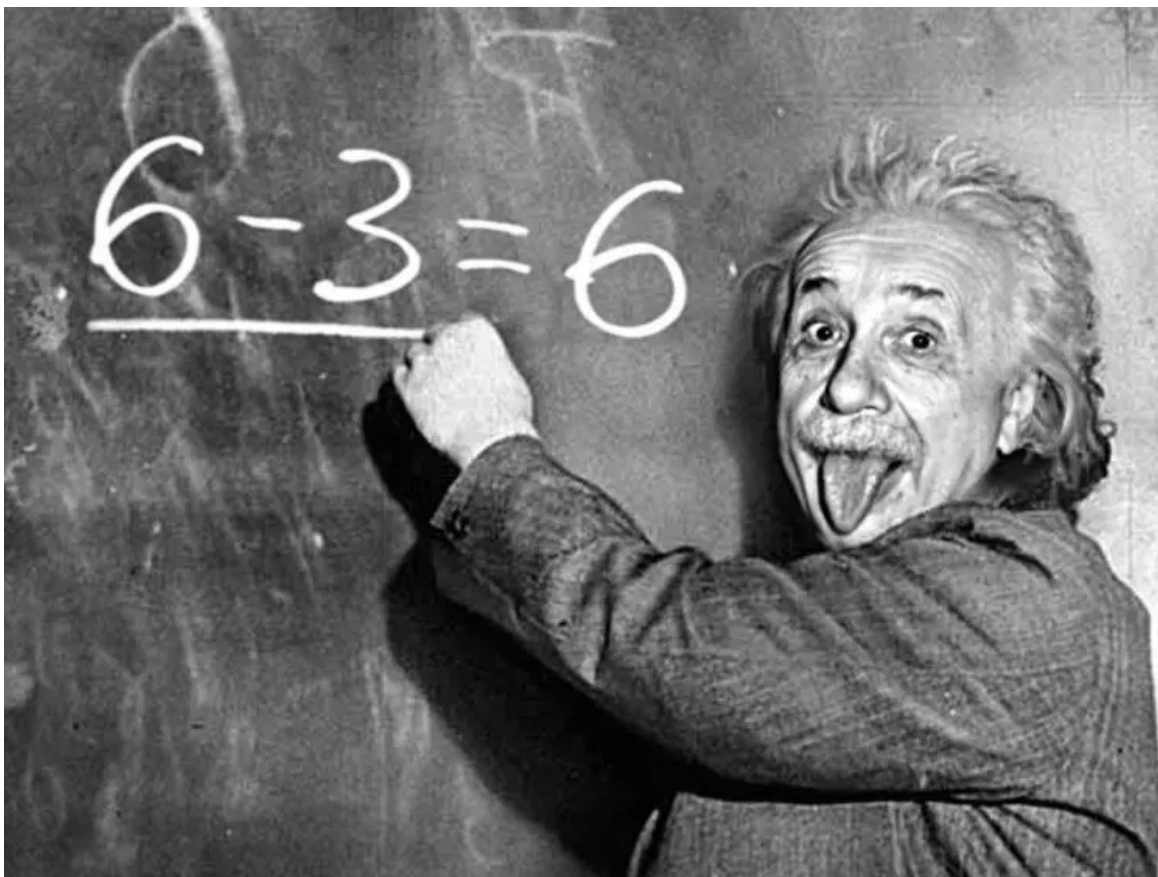




**The Autism Spectrum/ Neurodivergence** can be challenging but there are many people on the spectrum who have achieved great heights.



The **Autistic Spectrum/Neurodivergence** is a personality type that is characterized by differences from the general population in the area of social skills, communication skills, as well as the presence of certain behaviors which may look atypical from other people. **These behaviors are known as restrictive or repetitive behaviors.**

# AS Traits Can Contribute to Accomplishing Great Things

No matter what traits of autism you or your loved one may have, a person with autism has their own unique strengths and abilities. There are many **famous people with autism spectrum disorder** who have used their strengths and abilities to achieve success, fame, or to accomplish amazing things.

## Strong Interests Support Success

One example of **a trait of autism is called restricted interests**. This is a type of restrictive behavior. Restricted interests have to do with how the person with ASD has an intense passion for a certain topic. Whereas people without autism often have a range of interests and can easily switch focus from one topic or activity to another and may not commit to excelling at one particular thing, people with autism may have a limited and narrow range of interests.

This characteristic may contribute to the success that many people with ASD experience in life. By being able to focus and maintain one core interest for years or even for most of one's life, the person with ASD can use this interest to accomplish great things.

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## The AS Social Way of Being

Additionally, the way in which a person with autism experiences social interactions and their general social way of being may also contribute to their success. Although social skills vary widely from one person with ASD to another, in general, social skills for people with ASD may include things like having few (if any) friends, getting **overwhelmed by too much social interaction**, and limited tendency to share one's interests, thoughts, and feelings with others.

The way a person with autism approaches social experiences can support their success in life. For instance, having only a few close friends can support the person's well-being. Their friends may have similar interests and may be truly supportive of the person's goals.

Needing alone time and space from others can help the person with ASD to have a clearer and more focused mind. Not spending so much time socializing and on small talk and being more straightforward and logical in the way the person communicates with others can help them stay focused on their goals and reaching the next step for success.

This way of living can contribute not only to the person's success but also to their overall life satisfaction.

# Famous People in Autism Spectrum

We've reviewed some of the factors that may contribute to **success and accomplishments** in the life of a person with autism spectrum disorder. Let's now introduce some famous people who many people believe to have "ASD".

Some of the people we discuss have an **official diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder** or what was **previously known as Asperger's Disorder**. Others may not have an official diagnosis but may have **self-diagnosed** as autistic. And for some of the people we'll mention, many people speculate that these individuals would likely qualify as having autism spectrum personality.

## 1. Dan Aykroyd – Actor and Film Writer

Aykroyd is a comedic actor famous for his acting role and writing of the movie Ghostbusters released in 1984. His restricted interests have included ghosts and law enforcement.

## 2. Albert Einstein – Scientist & Mathematician

There's no way to know for sure, but many people believe that Albert Einstein would qualify as having autism spectrum disorder today.

## 3. Daryl Hannah – Actress & Environmental Activist

Daryl Hannah is known for her roles in films such as Splash, Blade Runner, and Steel Magnolias. She received an autism diagnosis as a child. She was extremely shy around other people and continued to be very fearful of the spotlight as an adult. One of her special interests was watching movies which supported her career as an actress.

#### 4. Anthony Hopkins – Actor

Anthony Hopkins is an award winning actor. He was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome as a child. Some of his traits of ASD include obsessive thinking, difficulty maintaining friendships, and looking at people with a unique perspective.

#### 5. Heather Kuzmich – Reality TV Contestant & Model

Heather Kuzmich participated in *America's Next Top Model* in 2007. Some of her traits of ASD include not understanding jokes, difficulty understanding social dialogue about others, and challenges with eye contact.

#### 6. Tim Burton – Movie Director

It is still under speculation whether Tim Burton has autism; However, his long-time partner, Helena Bonham Carter, believes that he does. He has a unique perspective and gets intensely focused on his work sometimes to the extent that he no longer hears what is going on around him.

#### 7. Henry Cavendish – Scientist

Cavendish is an renowned scientist. He was born in 1731 and passed away in 1810. He is most known for discovering hydrogen. Traits of ASD experienced by Cavendish included avoiding company and difficulty with eye contact. He would communicate with his servants in writing instead of verbally. He ordered his meals by leaving a note on the table. He had a private staircase built on the back of his house so he could avoid the housekeeper, as well.

## **8. Charles Darwin – Naturalist, Geologist, and Biologist**

Charles Darwin is believed to have autism spectrum disorder. Darwin was a very quiet person who avoided social interactions. He also preferred to communicate by writing rather than verbally and was very focused on his work.

## **9. Emily Dickinson – Poet**

Many believe that Emily Dickinson, a classical poet (1830-1886), would qualify as having autism. She was reserved around people. She had a basic and consistent way of dressing and she was better at interacting with children than adults.

## **10. Bobby Fischer – Chess Grandmaster**

Fischer is known as a chess grandmaster and World Chess Champion. He did not like unstructured experiences and did not interact well with others.

## **11. Bill Gates – Co-founder of the Microsoft Corporation**

Bill Gates is thought to have autism. He displays a rocking motion, a monotoned speech pattern, and avoids eye contact with others.

## **12. Barbara McClintock – Scientist and Cytogeneticist**

McClintock was a notable scientist who made important breakthroughs in the study of chromosomes and how they change during the reproduction process. She is thought to be autistic. She was able to focus for great lengths on her interests, specifically her work, and she found social attention very aversive, so much so that she almost refused the Nobel Prize.

### **13. Michelangelo – Sculptor, Painter, Architect, Poet**

Michelangelo, a famous artist, was born in 1475. He is thought to have had an extreme fixation on his work. He had difficulty with emotional regulation, had trouble with social interactions, and thrived on strict routines.

### **14. Sir Isaac Newton – Mathematician, Astronomer, & Physicist**

Newton is another example of a historical figure who attempted to isolate himself from others as much as possible. He did not enjoy social interactions and was thought to be awkward in conversations with others.

### **15. Jerry Seinfeld – Comedian**

Jerry Seinfeld is thought to be one of the most popular comedians of all time. He openly recognizes himself as having autism spectrum disorder due to his history of social challenges and unique way of thinking literally.

### **16. Satoshi Tajiri – Creator of Pokémon**

Tajiri was fascinated with bugs as a child and expanded upon his interest in adulthood by creating Pokemon.

### **17. Nikola Tesla – Inventor**

It is believed that Tesla had many phobias and that he was very sensitive to light and sound. He also preferred to be alone and is thought to have been obsessed with the number three.



## 18. Elon Musk – Entrepreneur

Elon Musk announced that he was on the autism spectrum while hosting the show, “Saturday Night Live,” in May 2021. More specifically, he stated that he was “the first person with Asperger’s” to host the show. Musk is one of the world’s richest people with a net worth of more than \$150 billion.

## 19. Clay Marzo – Professional Surfer

Marzo is a professional competitive surfer from Hawaii. He was diagnosed with autism as a child. He won many surfing competitions and had many accomplishments including two Perfect 10s during a National Scholastic Surfing Association at age 15.

## 20. Dr. Vernon Smith – Professor

Smith is a professor of economics at Chapman University. He is thought to have basically invented the field of experimental economics which led to winning a Nobel Prize. He feels that his ASD has helped him, because he doesn’t feel social pressures to do things the way other people do them, so he is able to approach his work in a different way by being more open-minded and coming up with new ideas.

## More Famous People in Autistic Spectrum

- Leonardo da Vinci – Artist
- Vincent van Gogh – Artist
- Steven Spielberg – Director
- Alfred Hitchcock – Director
- Thomas Edison – Inventor
- Alexander Graham Bell – Inventor



- Benjamin Franklin – Inventor
- Henry Ford – Inventor
- Ludwig van Beethoven – Musician
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Musician
- Bob Dylan – Musician
- James Taylor – Singer-Songwriter & Guitarist
- John Denver – Singer-Songwriter & Record Producer
- Charles Darwin – Naturalist & Geologist
- Carl Jung – Psychiatrist & Psychotherapist
- Lionel Messi – Football Player
- Samuel Clemens – Writer
- George Orwell – Writer
- Jane Austen – Writer
- Charles M. Schulz – Cartoonist

## Embracing Who You Are (with AS)

The people we have mentioned have been recognized for the amazing things they have accomplished in this world. They have touched the lives of so many people in a positive way. Autism spectrum disorder looks different in every person with the condition.

Although it's important to remember that many people with autism will need much more support than others, each person with ASD has their own strengths and abilities.

**People with autism can live a fulfilling life especially when they embrace who they are as unique and amazing human beings.**