TITLE: Untangling Autism: How to Parent Your Neurodiverse Child in a Neurotypical World (Kindle Edition)

AUTHOR: Hodgdon, Linda

SUBJECT AREA: Autism-Parenting

PUBLISHER: Quirk Roberts Publishing

PUBLICATION DATE: 2023

NUMBER OF PAGES: 222 (for Print Edition)

Though there has been a much greater understanding about the mysteries of autism over the years, there is still a lot we don't know and understand about ASD, and this is especially vexing for parents. Linda Hodgdon, the fantastic Speech-Language Pathologist and Autism Consultant has come out with another winner with her newest book, Untangling Autism, which addresses these not well understood aspects of ASD.

The book starts with an explanation of what is known about autism and basic information about ASD accompanied by gorgeous colorful illustrations making the information come to life in living color! One thing I haven't thought about, but is oh, so important, is that of the child with ASD having a communication partner. The partner could be a parent or a classmate who can work with the child to support him or her and to be a detective and figure out why Johnny is having so many meltdowns so that the child can get the help and support he needs.

As in all the other chapters, this one has Parent Pointers that suggest ways to implement the concepts at hand. For example, the author suggests that as a Communication Partner, the parent can change his or her approach to teaching their child if the traditional approach doesn't work, to address that child's neurodiverse learning style.

Untangle #3 addresses the complexities of communication in autism including features of communication commonly seen such as a child appearing to be "aloof" or uninterested in another person who is in the same room, or a child who uses physical gestures with another person to communicate their wants and needs. This chapter also covers nonverbal children with autism and the use of AAC to help with communication.

Untangle #4 addresses an important aspect of communication, receptive communication, how students are able to be attentive, to receive messages and to understand and process what is being said in order to respond appropriately. It has been thought that children with ASD understand whatever is being said, but that may not be true.The author has found that a child with ASD will understand something better when it is presented visually. I know that I myself need a visual anchor to get a grasp of a certain place. Subsequent chapters cover the use of visual strategies, the magic formula that Hodgdon swears by. The author also discusses coexisting conditions often included with autism such as sleep problems, anxiety, gut disturbances, getting medical help and the use of medications.

The most important Untangle of all is that autism cannot be outgrown and is a lifelong condition that often changes as the person grows older and has more experiences. The Parent Pointers in each chapter help to clarity the concepts in each chapter and there are concrete suggestions for addressing all the Tangles sprinkled throughout all of the chapters. The author strongly believes that autism is a difference, not a disability and the term "neurodiverse" is the best way to view it. This book is a brilliant one and one of the best guidebooks for parents of kids with ASD I have ever seen in my life!