

Assembly Required

My Life With Autism: From Nonspeaking to Attorney

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Opening Statements

The Nonverbal Child, The Jigsaw
Puzzles, and “That Kid”



Pathway to Autism Diagnosis

- Signs and Traits of Autism at age 3:
 - Nonverbal
 - Completing large jigsaw puzzles
 - Lack of social engagement





About “That Kid”

Assembling the Village



The Village

“It takes a village to raise a child. It takes an even bigger village to raise a child with a disability.”



➤ Does the Village Follow Instructions?

- There is no instruction manual for raising an autistic child
- There is no instruction manual for being an autistic person
 - We are not trying to become neurotypical people
- But, you can have a really awesome village
- Trial and error can work wonders

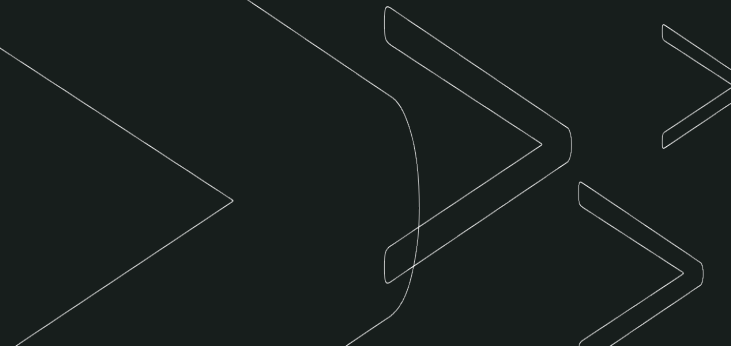
Chronological Order & The Alphabet



kelsey
@silence__kit

Some baby on this plane is singing the ABCs all out of order and a guy just shouted "yes girl remix!!"

Speaking & Writing Words



Is the Mic On?

- Mainstreamed in kindergarten
- Transition from echolalia
- Passion in talking
 - Wedding toasts
 - Drama
 - Special interests



Talking About Autism



Why I Write

- Writing as a third language
- The importance of giving back



Closing Arguments



I AM a work in progress,
I am getting to my goal
a little at a time,
not all at ONCE.

Journey to Attorney

- Graduated from college
- Graduated from law school
- Passed the Bar Exam!
- Sworn in as an attorney



➤ Unpacking “Openly Autistic”

“To me, being 'openly autistic' means not having to hide or mask my autism; it is the freedom to be exactly who I am.”



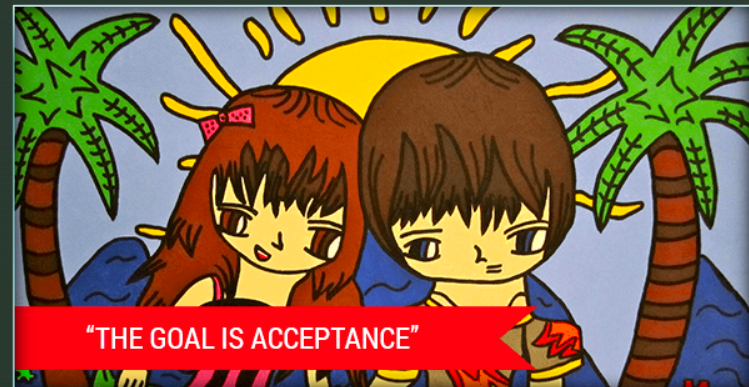
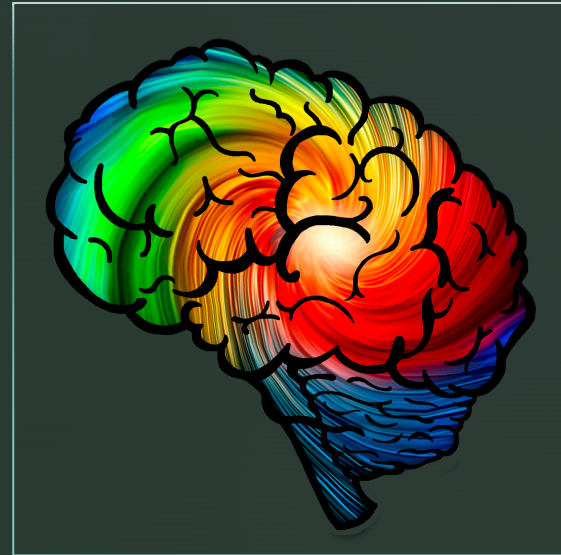
Passion. Positivity. Persistence.

- The things that drive me to become...
 - The best attorney I can be
 - The best autism advocate I can be
 - The best human I can be



Shaping The Conversation

- **Neurodiversity** is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other human variation.
 - Includes autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, Tourette Syndrome, and intellectual disabilities.



Thoughts on Inspiration

- My journey should not be exceptional
- Things that inspire me/should inspire you:
 - Making change
 - Getting involved in the autism community
 - Celebrating autistic achievements as a norm, rather than exception
 - Ending different disparities our community faces
 - Listening to diverse voices in autism