

## Resolution or correction?

During the last month I've had lots of thoughts float through my head. Not that thoughts about ASD float, more likely they pierce or clobber me in the head at the most unexpected moment and leave quite an ache in the heart as a result.

The thought that impacted me a lot during the last month and that I've continued to think about is to do with the lack of conflict resolution in our marital situations.

Most of us have reported feeling like nothing has ever been resolved over the entire duration of our relationship. This is of deep concern in any relationship of any duration, but some of these relationships have existed for twenty, thirty or forty years. How bleak. What have we done with all that stuff? Unfinished threads everywhere, tangled and tight, cutting off the circulation to all that is healthy.

I started to think more about resolution and reconciliation. I think this is an essential need, even a compulsion on our part, to look for resolution, to resolve conflict, to reach a place of harmony again, of agreeing, of being on the same page, of one mind. We seek it out, initiate it.

How does the ASD partner in our relationship respond when we try to initiate a resolution to some situation of conflict? Don't most of us feel drawn into combat with them rather than negotiation? Tit for tat. The situation escalates, becomes technical, one-up – one-down, emotions run high into rage; we cannot reason with them. And then we're called on to weather yet another meltdown, or carry on in their absence while they shut down. We can't revisit the issue. Another issue unresolved, leaving another raw and unhealed wound, or confusion, forever.

I think sometimes I portray the ASD person as having an impact on us in more passive ways rather than aggressive. I am sensitive to portraying ASD individuals as aggressive because this can be interpreted as them being "abusive" and this always has to be defined or qualified in some way to be fair (and safe to publish).

However, when it comes to conflict, I think Aspies have a compulsion too, though not for resolution in the way we do. I think they may have a compulsion to correct and to complete, and often in an aggressive manner.

They tend to need to control their environment to create predictability for themselves and to reduce their own anxieties, and the people around them actually form part of this environment that needs to be controlled. It is my belief that they have a set way they need us to behave, like a script. And if we don't follow it, in the right way and at the right time, we are corrected. I'm sure we all know that feeling of being corrected, and for many of us it is so frequent that it becomes part of what we take for granted. Remember the old report cards from school? "Responds well to correction." Great. If only they knew.

We all have that depth of character and humility that allows us to respond well to correction, but at what point is it taken too far? When we're constantly corrected, and often aggressively, to conform to someone else's script within the context of a relationship and home life, how much of ourselves is left?

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And what about the resolution we so desperately crave for wholeness of heart?

Another unmet need.

Carol Grigg, November 2014