

Purposeful Action

Another thing Tony Attwood shared with us in one of our workshops is that for there to be any hope of change or improvement in our relationships, our ASD partners must at least make some acknowledgement that there is a problem and be motivated to learn. He said that it is not necessary to achieve a diagnosis of ASD, but there must be some acknowledgement of and willingness to learn about ASD on the part of the person affected.

Many partners find that their ASD partner completely refuses to acknowledge or discuss the matter. And many find that if they try to push it, the reaction or meltdown is not worth it.

Where does this leave us? In many ways, the ASD adult's response is strategic for them because it ensures they can maintain their position.

Perhaps this gives you the freedom and right to choose your own position in response?

I really think the only way to make a shift is to stop talking and trying to explain the problem (which they often take as a personal attack), and just start "doing". Not with malice or retaliation, just purposeful action.

Choose your responses. Act. Calmly and firmly, without any fanfare. Stop waiting for neurotypical responses from them. Say what you are going to do and do it. Use logic, "cause and effect". Remind yourself of your own values and begin to live in a way that is true to yourself. It will take some courage. Make some ultimatums or trade-offs with your partner, one at a time. You do not have to tolerate bad behaviour. It is ok to leave the room or leave the house. In general it is futile trying to reason with them.

Save your energy, acknowledge your reality, choose your response and follow through. Take your time. In many ways it will be like a conditioning process and in time you may find you've achieved more than you thought you could.

Always seek professional help or make sure someone knows whether you're ok or not.

Carol Grigg, August 2015