

Some seem to have it covered

In my counselling and personal experience I've begun to be aware of a subset of ASD partners who perform very highly in the job description of partner as though they must be applying themselves to it as a special interest.

We've heard of some who've made their partner their special interest (long-term) with a high level of adulation and attention (maybe stifling) but still don't connect emotionally in any consistent way. But I hadn't focused previously on some who actually make it their business to be the best partner anyone can have, leaving no grounds for anyone to fault them. They have it covered. Except the partner still feels so alone and emotionally empty. Many practical and physical needs are well catered for, solutions are swiftly provided to meet any difficulty, but the partner still feels invisible as an actual soul with feelings and emotional needs.

The performance may be flawless, but it's still superficial, just ticking the boxes, like making moves on a chess board. Very deliberately it would seem. Partners report feeling like their partner heads them off at the pass constantly. Like all their needs have been analysed and predicted, with solutions applied before they can even think let alone open their mouths to ask. And how dare they ask or have a need that hasn't been catered for already.

Maybe there are other factors in these situations. There's an awareness, capacity and motivation to perform that many Aspies don't seem to have, but nevertheless I've heard it enough now to want to include it in what I write about. Emotional intimacy, closeness and connection are still missing, but most other bases are covered in a way that leaves no ground for complaint. A great deal of intelligence is being applied here.

In a couple of these situations the relationship has actually been ended by the ASD partner when the non-ASD partner persisted in asking for emotional intimacy and change, or questioning the ASD partner's performance in any way. Seems the preferred path may be to leave rather than acknowledge an inadequacy or a need that he/she has no solution for. It's sad considering this as a possibility, and again the "if only's" that constantly plague our memories.

Carol Grigg, March 2016