

Self-Employment and the Autism Spectrum

Jonathan A. Sharp

Owner, J.A. Sharp Business Services

Founder and Facilitator: Mountain Empire Aspies

Johnson City, TN

About Me:

- ❖ Diagnosed with Asperger's at Duke in 1995
- ❖ Two Associate Degrees (Both with Honors)
 - ❖ AAS: Hotel and Restaurant Management
 - ❖ AAS: Accounting
- ❖ Owner, J.A. Sharp Business Services
 - ❖ Bookkeeping Services for Small Businesses
 - ❖ In Business since 2009
- ❖ Founder and Facilitator: Mountain Empire Aspies
 - ❖ Social/Support Group for Adults with Asperger's and related conditions.
 - ❖ Founded in 2009
- ❖ Single, I love Architecture, Freeway Design, and Dachshunds

Employment Statistics

- ❖ About 19% of people with a disability are gainfully employed, as opposed to 65% of non-disabled people.
- ❖ About 37% of people with Autism were employed at least part time after High School (3rd lowest among other disabilities)
- ❖ About 63% of people with Autism have been employed since High School (2nd lowest among other disabilities)
- ❖ People with Autism had the 3rd highest duration of their jobs (24 Months) and have only had on average 3 jobs since High School (3rd lowest)
- ❖ The top three job types for people with Autism are Office Work (19%), Transportation (15%), and Food Service (12.8%)
- ❖ Only about 4% of people with Autism are employed in High Tech fields

Employment Statistics-Continued

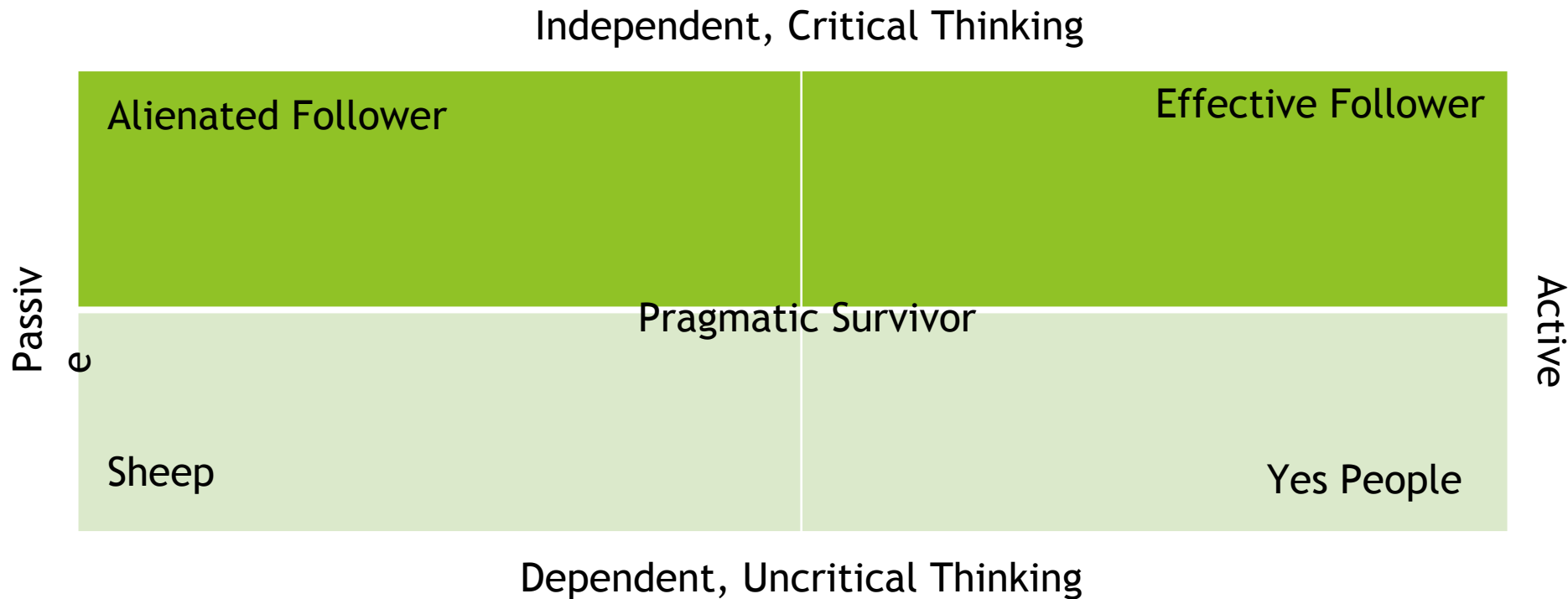
- ❖ Autistic employees have high job satisfaction
- ❖ Autistic employees do not feel that their education and training are being put to good use
- ❖ Only about 59% of Autistic employees indicated they had ample opportunity for job growth (2nd lowest)
- ❖ Only about 53% report being granted a promotion (3rd lowest)
- ❖ Autistic employees have the lowest rate of quitting a job, 4th highest of being fired, 3rd highest of being laid off. Most of the job terminations were due to a job being temporary and the job ending.
- ❖ Only about 32% of Autistics were looking for a job (2nd lowest) and the job search took about 12 months (2nd highest)

How Self-Employment has helped me

- ❖ I control how much I earn
- ❖ I am able to keep my benefits
- ❖ Reduced Social Interaction
- ❖ No Office Politics
- ❖ Less Stress
- ❖ More Freedom!

Effective Follower/Leader

To be an Effective Leader, one needs to be an Effective Follower first
These Skills can be trained to anyone, Regardless of ability



Advantages to Self Employment

- ❖ Less Contact with People
- ❖ You ARE the boss
- ❖ You have control over what you earn
- ❖ You set the hours
- ❖ You control the Work Environment
- ❖ Easy Tax Deductions

Disadvantages to Self Employment

- ❖ Must Keep all customers happy (Hidden Bosses)
- ❖ Market Fluctuations
- ❖ Taxation Issues
- ❖ Must have the willpower to commit to work!
- ❖ Bookkeeping (making sure you are actually making a profit)

Examples of Good Self-Employment Careers for People on the Spectrum



Examples of Good Self-Employment Careers for People on the Spectrum

- ❖ Needs Less Support
 - ❖ Bookkeeping/Tax Preparation
 - ❖ Paralegal
 - ❖ Medical Transcription
 - ❖ Medical Coding
 - ❖ Grant Writing
 - ❖ Skilled Trades

All of these careers require some post High School training and possible apprenticeships.

Examples of Good Self-Employment Careers for People on the Spectrum (Continued)



Examples of Good Self-Employment Careers for People on the Spectrum (Continued)

- ❖ Needs More Support
 - ❖ Jewelry Making
 - ❖ Making Presentations (Power Points)
 - ❖ Web Page Design
 - ❖ Clothing Alterations/Tailoring
 - ❖ Independent Laundry Attendant (Wash and Fold at a Laundromat)

Questions or Comments?

Abigail the Wonder Dachshund



Sources

- ❖ Table A-6 (Employment status of the Civilian Population by sex, age, and disability status, not seasonally adjusted. U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.t06.htm . 9 March 2018 (Slide 3, 1st bulleted item)
- ❖ Newman, L. and 11 others,(2011). *The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities up to 8 years After High School. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2(NLTS2)* (NCSE 2011-3005) Menlo Park, CA: SRI International (rest of slide 3 and all of slide 4)
- ❖ Kelley, Robert. *In Praise of Followers*. Harvard Business Review. November 1988. (Slide 6)
- ❖ Pictures in Presentation are Open Source License According to Google Images (Except Abigail the Dachshund on Slide 13 taken by me.)

Thank You!

Jonathan A. Sharp
J.A. Sharp Business Services
Mountain Empire Aspies
Johnson City, TN
E-mail: mtnempireaspies@gmail.com