



Autism and Talent

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Autism spectrum conditions affect as many as one in a hundred people. One of the most startling aspects of this social-communication disorder is the high rate of special, or savant, skills. Around 10% of people with autism are thought to have a striking skill in music, art, calculation, or memory. So why might people with severe social-communication impairments be predisposed to develop perfect pitch, photographic-like memory, or lightning calculation?

This book explores the puzzle of talent and its close association with autism. Expert contributors from many areas of both science and the arts describe the latest research - using brain scanning, experimental tasks, twin studies, and case histories of extraordinary savants. It considers many of the puzzling questions the relationship between autism and talent raises: Do similar genetic effects predispose for talent and for autism? What is the role of obsessive practice? Could we all become savants? What is special in the brains of people with savant skills? Is detail-focus at the root of talent in ASD and non-ASD individuals? How can talents best be fostered in children and adults with social and communication difficulties?

With contributions from some of the leading authorities in the world, the book tries to unravel the mystery of savant skills in autism, as well as reflecting on the very different way that people with autism (with or without talent) see and understand the world. It will be of great interest to a broad readership across the sciences, arts, and humanities

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