

Mental health

What does it mean to me? Autistic me.

It is a battle ship that sails on often stormy seas. Sometimes the storms are so ferocious the ship is full of water and feels like sinking. Smashed by waves of overwhelming and meltdown, drowning in misunderstandings, crashing into rocks of bad communication, hurled by winds of rejection, unacceptance and judgment.

There are also days of peace, calm, and tranquil beautiful waters that are gentle and serene. The sun shines. All is well.

How do I weather these storms?

It depends on what causes them. If we can find responsibility for our part in them, that helps a lot. I do navigate the wrong way sometimes, I do know better but still fall into old patterns of behavior, it can be my fault that I end up in a tempest. Here is an example of how to avoid crashing onto those rocks driven by that wind.

One big thing is it does not matter if I don't reply to someone on social media. Let it go. If they are not understanding me, my forthright black and white outspoken sometimes over sharing replies fall on deaf ears, and I will be triggered because I am not understood. We all have different perceptions. We can agree to differ and some won't so it is pointless to argue. Step away from conflict. Do not fuel fires. If you see people engaged in arguments on social media. Walk away. Your focus being set on happy calm engagements and conversation brings a better outcome. Peaceful, happy interactions. Pay attention to what you focus on. You can empower yourself or end up drained and that is all your choice. Being responsible for your personal mental health means making informed choices. Process things. Think and act wisely.

Time is of the essence if you are sliding down a slippery slope and one person listening can stop that descent and change the direction with kindness, compassion and caring. Reaching out and being available is important. If you are having your own personal crisis, then you cannot be available. Giving all your energy away when you need some for yourself is also a matter of choice. You must have something left for you too or you cannot function and your mental health will suffer. Saying no at times for self preservation and for your own personal mental health needs is an important part of self care. If someone else does not understand why, it is theirs. Not yours to worry about. Other people's thoughts, actions and perceptions belong to them. I can only look at my own and work on the best way forward for me.

My sanctuary and safety is at home with my dogs. They also have emotional needs and need mental health wellness. Being there for them is essential as my part of being a caregiver for them. I learnt about dog body language. I can also communicate another way, energetically. I can remember communicating with nature when I was a child. I believe this ability is because I

am autistic. They speak in a different way to us, and being able to listen to them is as important as us being heard. If you have dogs, it will deepen your bond and bring hugely improved communication and connection if you learn how they communicate. It will open a door of understanding each other so much better

Whether I am sailing stormy seas, or blissfully basking in calm waters, I continue to progress along my path.

I believe you need both as it is balance. You cannot have light without dark. Like yin and yang and day and night.

Accepting and embracing all of us, the light and dark parts too, some call it the shadow self, makes us whole. You cannot be whole without self acceptance.

I am never lonely because I am comfortable in my own skin. I am at peace with who I am, finally! it has taken a long time and a lot of work to arrive at this destination. I also have 5 amazing companions who need care, attention and I am committed to giving them the best possible life. If you do struggle with loneliness you can list all the things you are grateful for. That can start with a simple thing like the last meal you had. It can be a short or long list. It is helping to change and guide the way of thinking to something that is meaningful and fulfilling. When we can change our perceptions we are choosing to be captains of our own ship, destiny and destinations. Choose happiness, kindness, compassion and see where that takes you.

Change is inevitable.

Growth is optional.

My journey has been extreme. Probably will continue to be. That is my life and to be honest, I love the wild roller coaster ride it is, and a good job too, as it is all mine.