

Divergence and The Autistic Performance



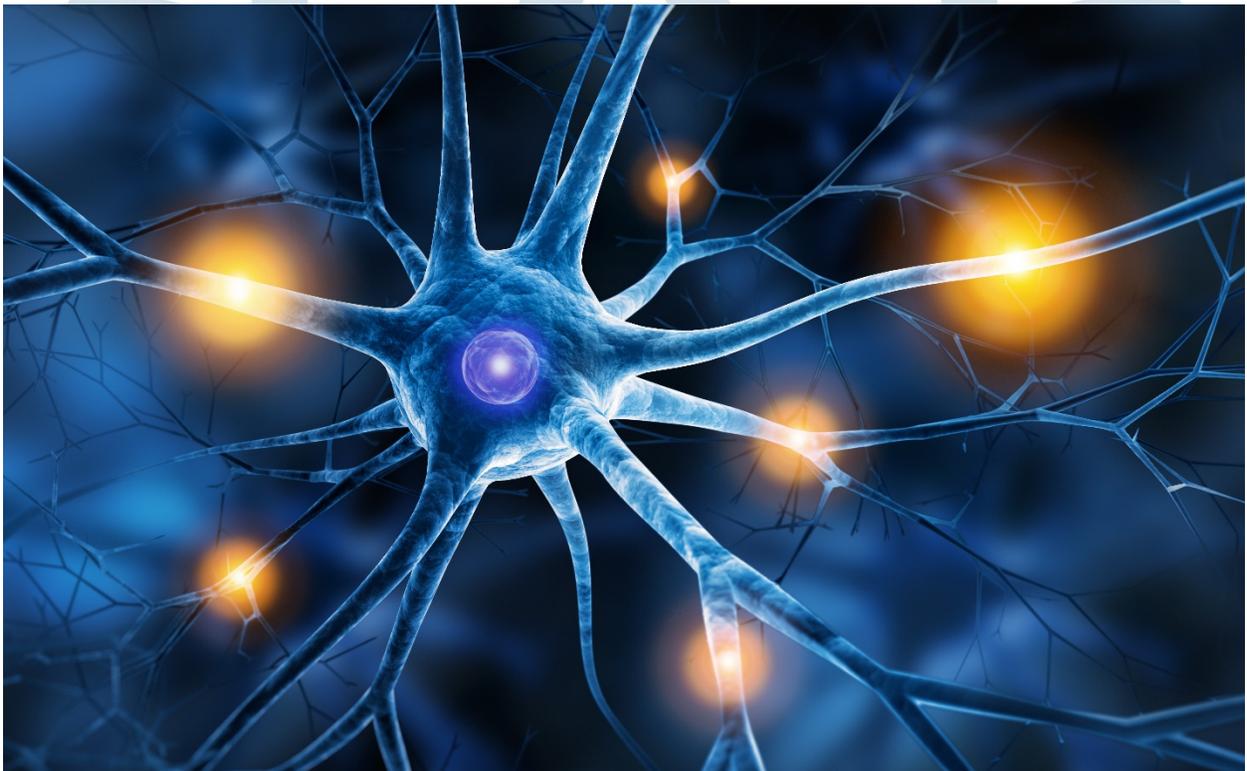
For hundreds of years, women have been trained to behave in ways that are deemed acceptable by [white] men within our society. We are told to keep our voices down; to clean up after our brothers; to be home early; to be careful not to encourage a man to get the wrong idea. If we show emotion, we are told to stop being so sensitive. If we appear to be enjoying ourselves, we hear things like, 'that's not very lady like'. People who appear weak are referred to as 'pussy' or maybe they 'throw like a girl'.



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But it is not only women.

Have you ever observed young children who appear to ‘have a great sense of imagination’? They seem to be in their own little world and have zero need for inclusion by others. They sometimes appear as though they are acting out the scenes of movie. And it can be an hours long activity. Almost like they wrote a whole movie and are acting it out.



Have you watched these same children struggle with speech or language issues? Or maybe they were aggressive or exceptionally frustrated at times.

They are the same kids whose parent's received phone calls from school because they decided to strip down in the middle of a class or because they threw a chair.

Unless you are a woman. Women with divergent minds manage The Autistic Performance so well. And why not, they have been told that in addition to the many ways they might feel abnormal, that they are just too sensitive or too emotional. Are we really surprised that they did not also speak up when they recognized that they had additional challenges? In fact, young women on the spectrum tend to be perfectly behaved to the extent that they have remained unnoticed. Invisible and unnoticed and by the time they hit adulthood, barely functional without the performance. Riddled by debilitating anxiety and depression that often times can internalize into pain because there is no acceptable form of expression.

AUTISM



What exactly do I mean by The Autistic Performance? This is the job of acting that is a learned skill of nearly, if not, all humans on the spectrum. It defines the ability for an autistic person to manage the appearance of normal and sometimes not particularly well often, are able to fill the mold that our society has created for all of its people. To manage day to day functions, go to the grocery, drive, complete homework, not yell, not appear angry, pretend to walk down that hallway, go outside without a hat or hoodie, keep your clothes on, walk into that building without letting everyone know that you have no idea what to do or how to act; are challenges, for which the solution is to learn to how to act. They mask, they code, they camouflage, they act. They perform.

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Remember the children from above who could be observed in their own worlds? If you want to understand what is happening, look to the performance. How does someone learn to perform?

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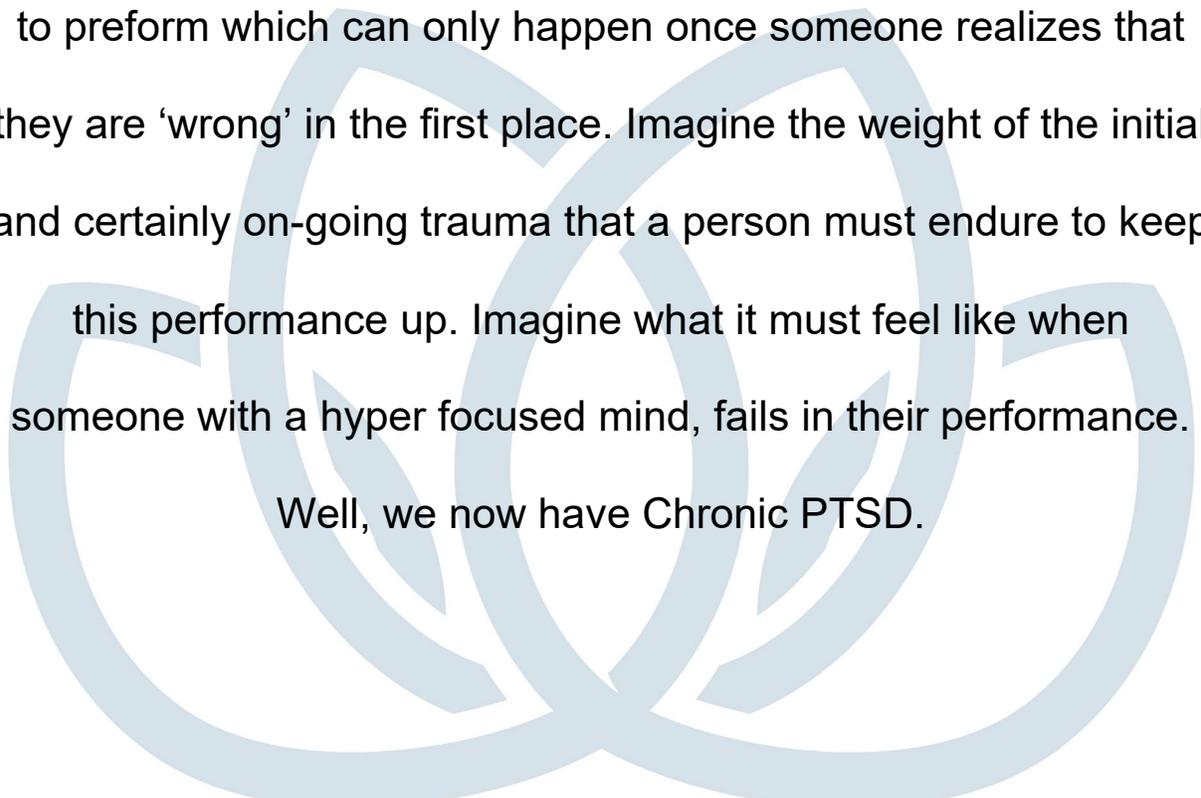
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What would happen if we did not create a world where people with challenges, were forced to preform to be 'pleasing' or

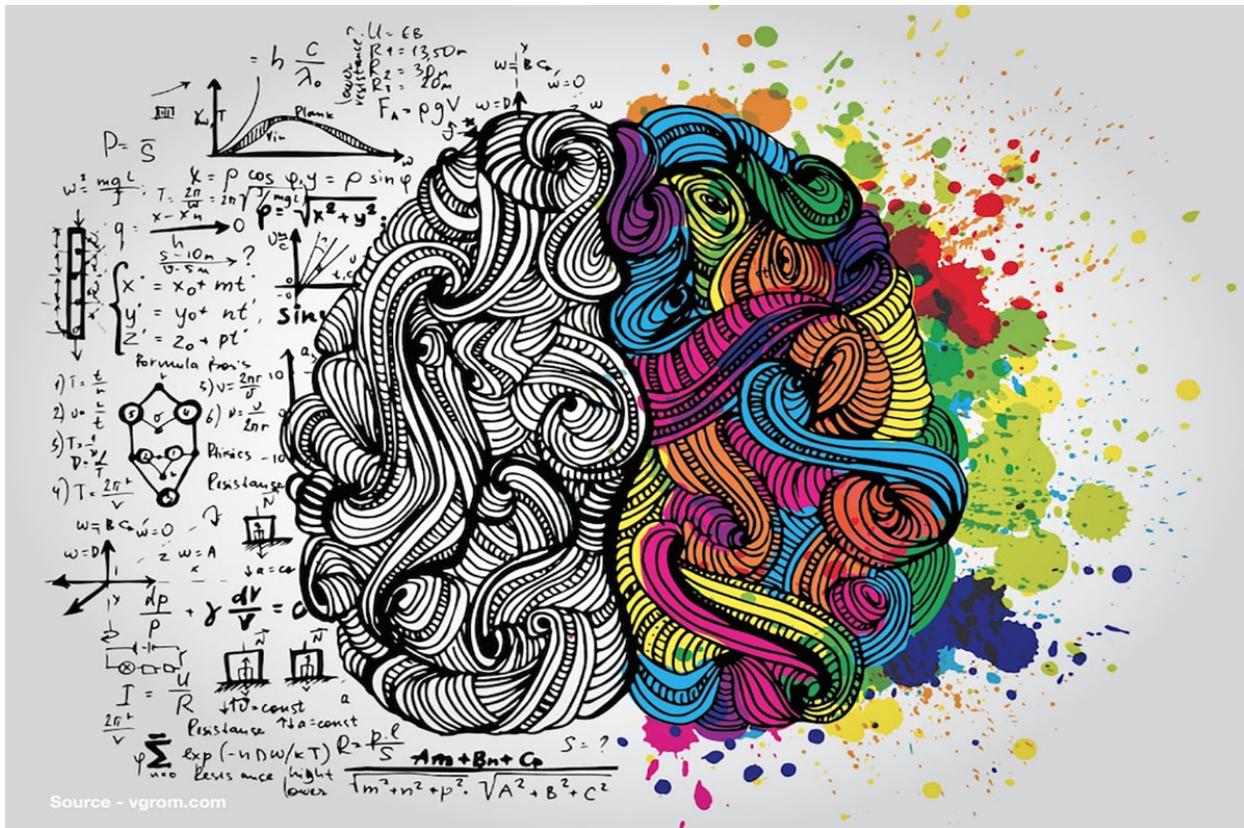
'pleasant'? What if we empowered them to grow with their challenges, accepting them?

Imagine the weight of necessarily being forced into learning how to perform which can only happen once someone realizes that they are 'wrong' in the first place. Imagine the weight of the initial and certainly on-going trauma that a person must endure to keep this performance up. Imagine what it must feel like when someone with a hyper focused mind, fails in their performance.

Well, we now have Chronic PTSD.



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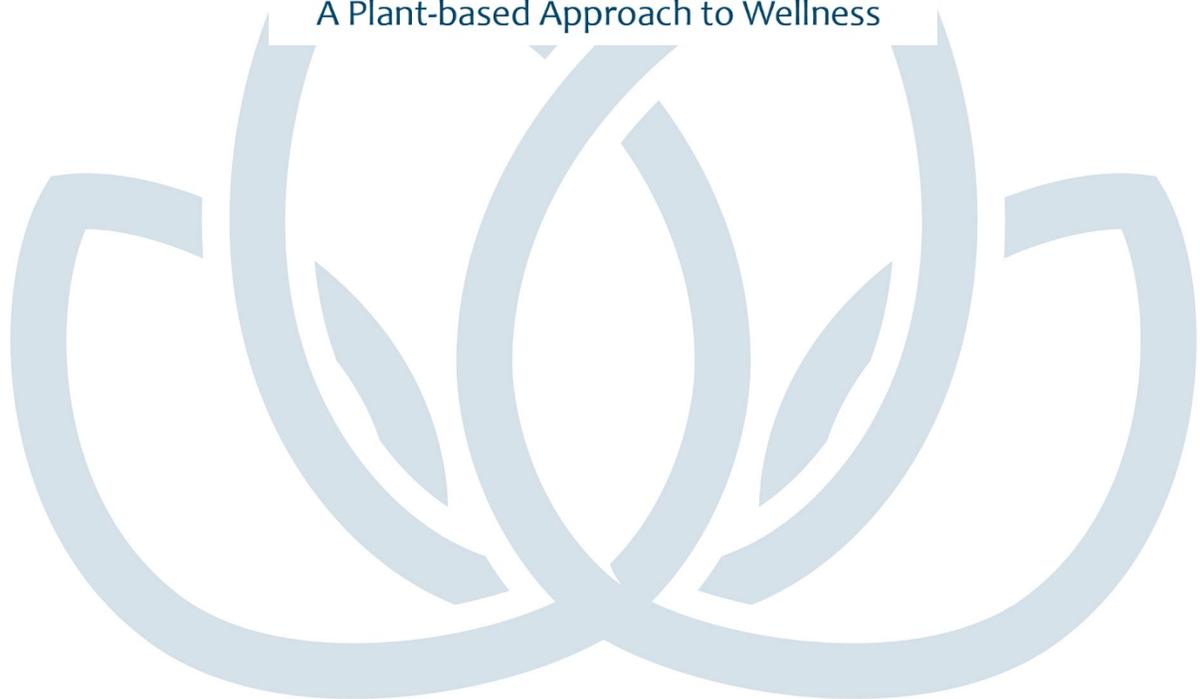
Someday, lets empower these performers but also ask what they are like when they are not performing for our sake.

In my office, that day is today. That day is every day.



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A Plant-based Approach to Wellness



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