

Russell Lehmann
www.TheAutisticPoet.com



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The Autistic Poet

Introduction:

Who is Russell Lehmann?

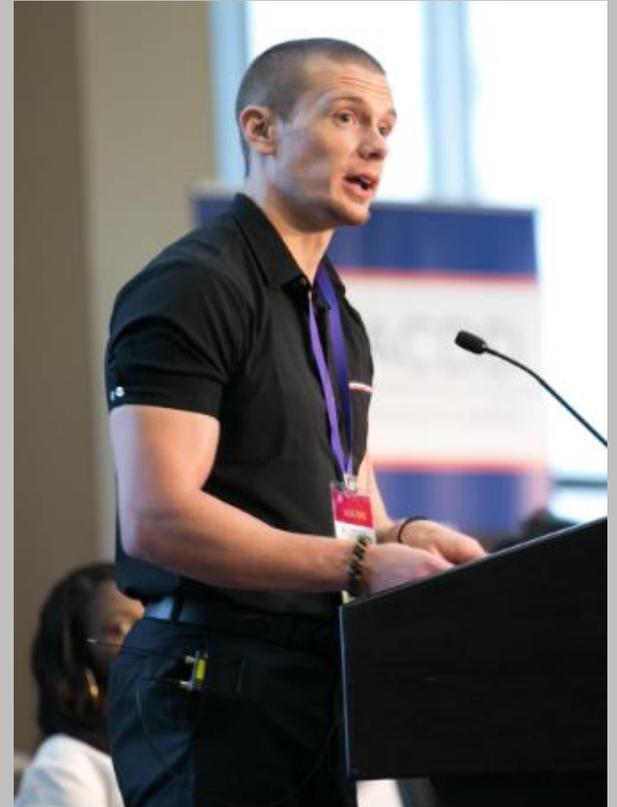
- **31 year-old Motivational Speaker and Poet**
- **2019 “Leadership in the Digital Age” Graduate - *MIT Sloan School of Management***
- **2018 Reno-Tahoe “Most Outstanding Young Professional”**
- **Archived in the Library of Congress**
- **National Board of Directors, The Arc of the United States**
- **Council Member, Autism Society of America**
- **Contributor, Psychology Today**
- **Former Member, Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities**
- **Former Member, Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders**



Passion & Purpose: To Suffer and Endure



Then



Now

Inclusion:

What is it and how do we attain it?

inclusion

[in-kloo-zhuhn]

the practice or policy of including and integrating all people and groups in activities, organizations, political processes, etc., especially those who are disadvantaged, have suffered discrimination, or are living with disabilities.

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me



- Spent the school day sleeping in the principal's office, being bullied whenever I would come into contact with others
- In 2003, at the age of 12, was finally diagnosed with autism at the University of Washington's Autism Center



Autism and School Spoken Word Poem

What Does It Feel Like
to Not Be Heard?

By Russell Lehmann

www.TheAutisticPoet.com

Knowing vs. Feeling

What's the Difference?

- To *know* is to be aware; Objective.
- To *feel* what you know is to process this awareness; Subjective

***“We don’t see things as they
are,
we see them as we are.”***

- Anais Nin

ABA divide and the Value of Individualized Services

“Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientific approach to understanding behavior. ABA refers to a set of principles that focus on how behaviors change, or are affected by the environment, as well as how learning takes place. The term behavior refers to skills and actions needed to talk, play, and live. While these principles impact everyone each day, they can be applied systematically through interventions to help individuals learn and apply new skills in their daily lives.”

***Dawn Hendricks, Ph.D., Susan Palko, M.Ed. and Adam Dreyfus, MA, BCBA
VCU Autism Center for Excellence***

A black and white portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing his characteristic round glasses and a white shawl. He has a slight smile and is looking directly at the camera. The background is plain white.

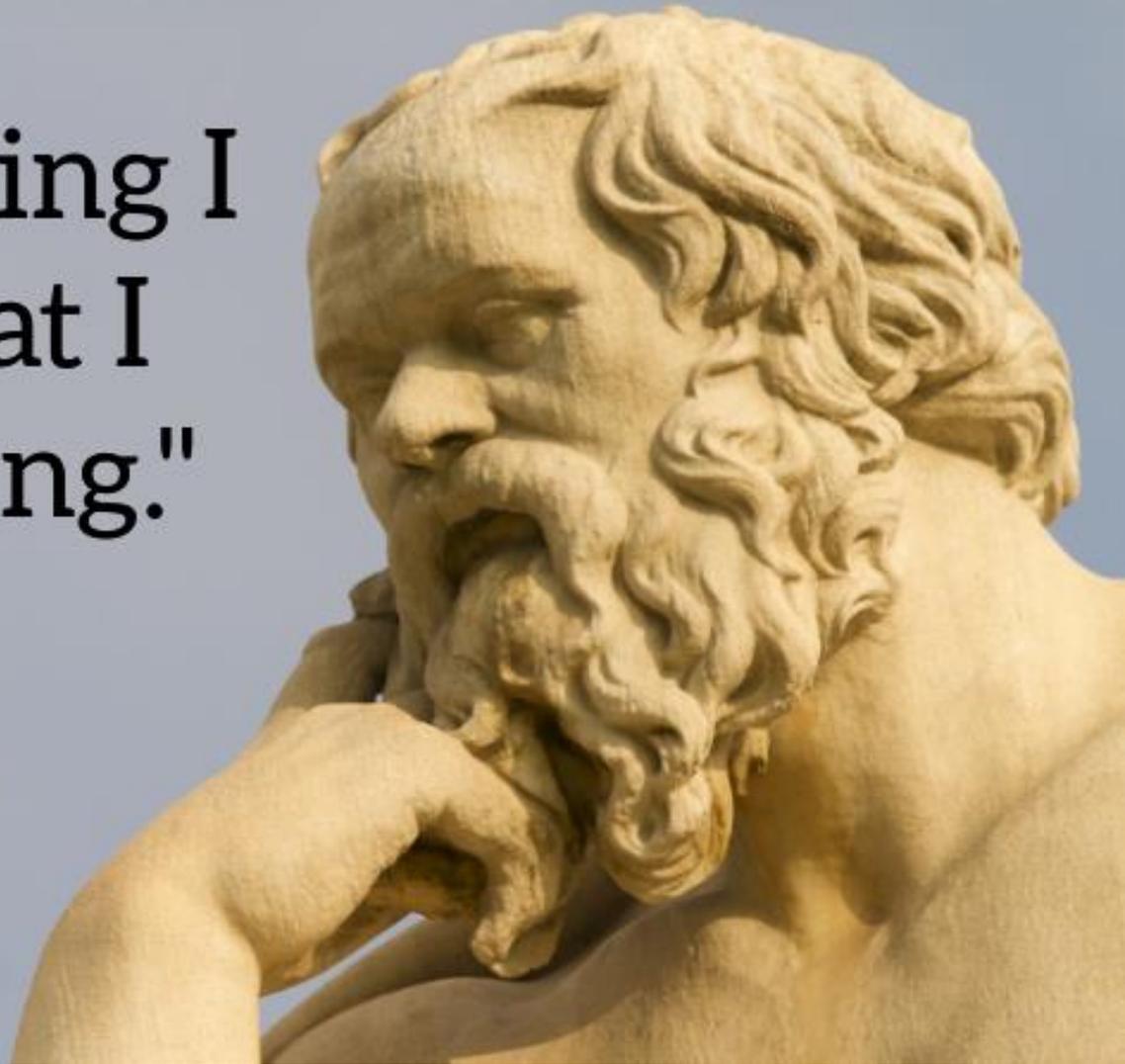
**Disagreement is often
a sign
of progress**

~ Mahatma Gandhi ~

"The only thing I
know is that I
know nothing."

~

Socrates



WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A BAT?

Our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited. It will not help to try to imagine that one has webbing on one's arms, which enables one to fly around at dusk and dawn catching insects in one's mouth; that one has very poor vision, and perceives the surrounding world by a system of reflected high-frequency sound signals; and that one spends the day hanging upside down by one's feet in an attic. In so far as I can imagine this (which is not very far), it tells me only what it would be like for *me* to behave as a bat behaves. But that is not the question. I want to know what it is like for a *bat* to be a bat. Yet if I try to imagine this, I am restricted to the resources of my own mind, and those resources are inadequate to the task. I cannot perform it either by imagining additions to my present experience, or by imagining segments gradually subtracted from it, or by imagining some combination of additions, subtractions, and modifications.

Compassion
is a verb.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

Supporting Individuals with Invisible Disabilities

- Gauge their body language.
- Regular check-ins such as “How are you doing?” or “Anything you need?”
- Do not take a behavior at face value, it is a by-product of an emotion.
 - Take every opportunity to enter *their* world.
 - Be kind. The simplest actions often mean the most.

Initiating Vulnerable and Sensitive Dialogue

- Ask easy “yes” or “no” questions to start.
- Share a vulnerability of yours to foster a connection and gain some trust.
 - Do not take action, simply listen.
- Prove your genuine interest by repeating important details mentioned when speaking.
- Reduction focused inquiries, balance this with examples of your own.

“How can I help?”

**I may have a disability, but I *refuse*
to let my disability have me!**



PERSEVERANCE

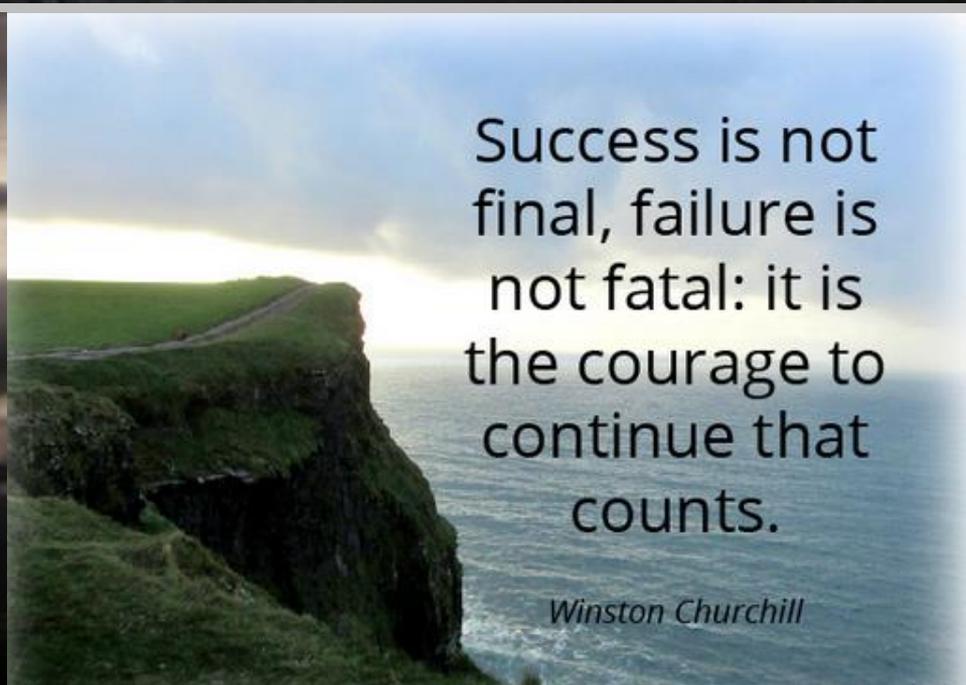
noun

1. steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement



Without fear there
cannot be courage.

Christopher Paolini



Success is not
final, failure is
not fatal: it is
the courage to
continue that
counts.

Winston Churchill

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me Now



**Travel the world contextualizing autism, mental health,
and the overall human condition.**

On the Outside Looking in

- Expansion of First Book

- 450 pages of utterly transparent view into world of autism and mental health

- Over 80 powerful and emotional poems

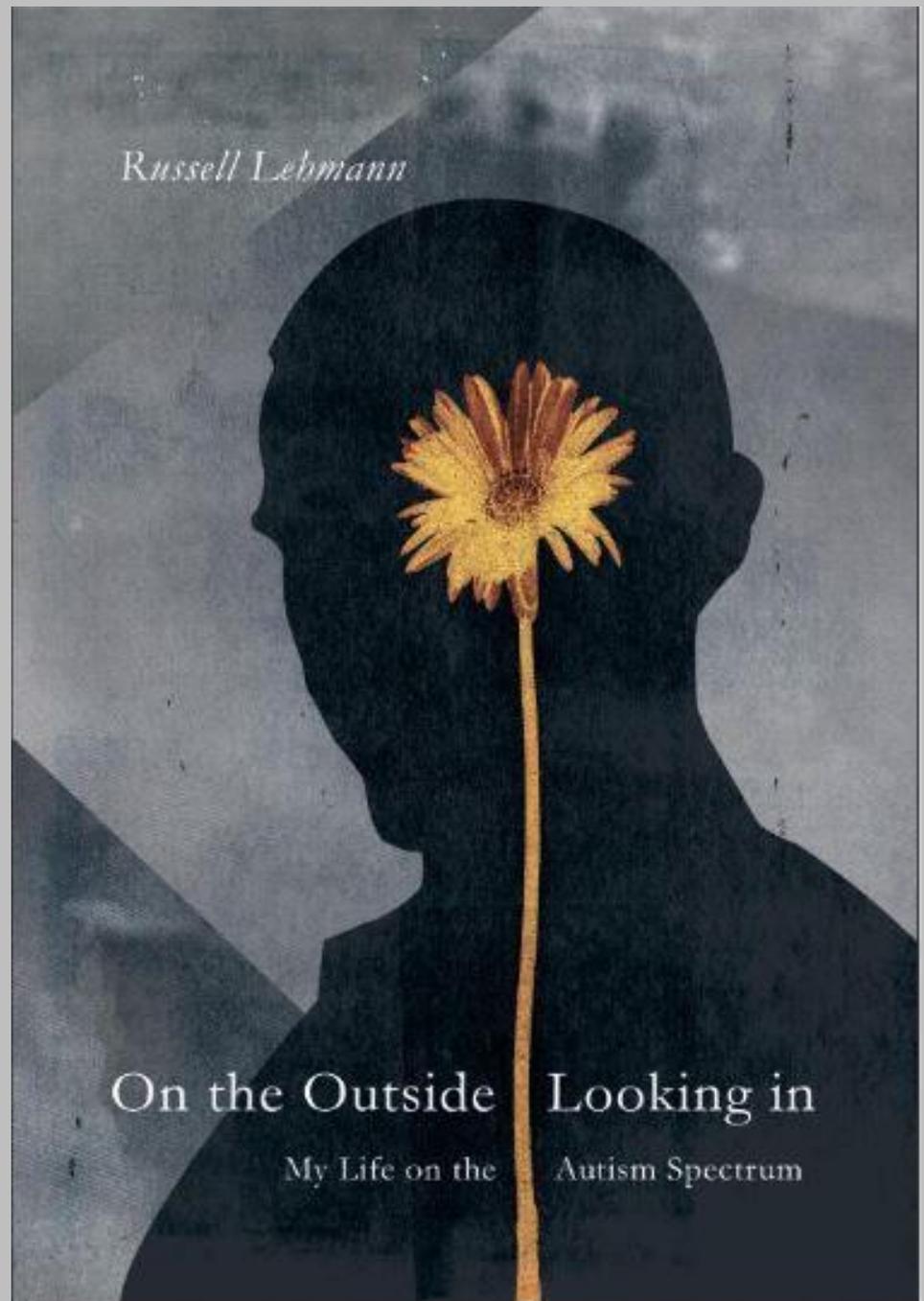
- Shared are lessons learned and insights gained

- PG-13

- \$30

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Keynotes, trainings and workshops

Book an event, reach out, ask questions.

Let's change the world...together!



Please contact me at

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