

**Uniquely Us**  
**Gracefully Navigating the Maze of**  
**Neurodiverse Marriage**  
**Autism Faith Marriage**

**Introduction:**

What is Neurodiversity?

What Autism Is and Is Not

# Introduction

## What is Neurodiversity?

**Harvard Health Publishing:** *neurodiversity* refers to types of brain neurology and wiring that are different from the typical population, and most often includes autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning differences or disabilities and other developmental differences, difficulties, delays and divergences

**This book:** Because the term “neurodiversity” can have a broader meaning, for this book we intend it to apply to autism (ASD) or ADHD.

# Introduction

## What Autism Is:

A broad *spectrum* of developmental challenges including:

- Challenges or differences socially, relationally, and behaviorally
- Sensory processing differences,
- Restricted or repetitive behaviors,
- Various executive function challenges

A neurological difference that:

- Makes it difficult for the person to predict the actions of others,
- Compromises their ability to cope with social expectations
- Limits the ability to emotionally regulate or make transitions in less predictable environments.

# Introduction

## **What Autism Is (continued):**

*Individuals on the autism spectrum struggle with Theory of Mind (ToM), recognizing emotions, and executive function (which includes organizing, planning, prioritizing, mental flexibility, self-awareness, evaluating social impact, and accessing working memory).*

**Theory Of Mind:** Ability to understand the intentions and thoughts of others as well as understanding that others can have different perspectives, including an ability to read nonverbal communication such as facial expression, gestures or inflections in tone.

# Introduction

## **What Autism Is (continued):**

Autism Spectrum-a range of severity levels according to the current DSM-V:

**Level 1** (Asperger's Syndrome [ASD] or High Functioning Autism[HFA])

- Social communication differences and difficulties
- Repetitive behaviors or routines
- Little to some support needed in these areas

**Level 2** Autism requires moderate to substantial support

**Level 3** Autism requires very substantial support

# Introduction

## **What Autism Is Not**

While Autism is categorized as a developmental delay or disorder it is not

- Always diagnosed in childhood
- Something that can be outgrown
- A barrier to career success
- A barrier to marriage and having a family
- An indicator of intelligence
- A spiritual issue

# Introduction

## **How to use this book**

If in a neurodiverse relationship this book can be a guide to finding appropriate help.

If a pastor, counselor, or coach working with marriages this book will broaden your view of autism and equip you to better serve neurodiverse couples you may encounter.