

Learning My Own Way

Adonay Kubrom

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. In what ways do you like to learn? How would you describe your learning style?
2. What do you know about autism? Read the boxes on pp. 12-13. Think about the word *spectrum*. What does it mean? What does it mean to have a condition on a *spectrum*?



My Disability Is Autism

Autism is an intellectual disability. It takes me a long time to learn about everything old and new. I have difficulty navigating daily life. It is difficult to make friends with average people because of my lack of communication. It is also difficult to pass the driving test because of my limited English. I don't have my freedom. I am dependent on my family to drive me around.

With all of these challenges, I am able to have a normal life by memorizing anything I need to learn until it is finally in my head. It is very difficult to listen to verbal instruction. It helps if I make recordings of the instructions. Then I can listen again on my own time. It also helps if I have a hands-on or visual opportunity to learn. For example, I can learn better by watching videos on YouTube.

My school is very supportive. I am in the College to Career (C2C) Program, a three-year program designed to help people like me get a college education and find employment. The program is funded by the Department of Rehabilitation, a California state agency that helps people with disabilities find employment, independence, and equality. This program is threatened by the Trump Administration, because

he is trying to eliminate programs that aim to be inclusive of all people.¹

My Most Perfect Plan in School

Mary Schexnaydre, a C2C coach, says, "I have seen magical things happen in this program. In the three years that students are with us, I watch them transform from timid novices to confident professionals who have a strong sense of self. C2C helps students answer the questions: who am I, what I am good at, and what do I care about."²

Before I was admitted to the C2C Program, I was going to the Petaluma Transition Program (PTP). PTP is a community-like program provided by Petaluma City Schools for students ages 18-22 who have disabilities and have finished their high school program with a Certificate of Completion. This program prepared me to get into the C2C



What Is Autism?

According to the medical definition, autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, and speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 31 children and 1 in 45 adults in the United States today.

Source: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>

Program. The first time I applied to C2C, I didn't get in. However, with the help of PTP staff, I was able to get in the second time. I really appreciate all the support I receive from them.

In my C2C classes, I am learning how to write a resume, pick out the jobs that I want, and figure out my personal values and what kind of work environment I want. I have only a year and half left before I graduate.

I want to get a job at a library or comic book store due to the fact that I always enjoy reading novels and comic books. My work experience includes working at Casa Grande High School's library as an assistant and working at CVS as a restocking clerk. At the library, I cleaned and organized tables, chairs, and books. At CVS, I organized items on the shelves, checked the expiration dates on food and drinks, and took out the trash.

Everyone Deserves an Opportunity

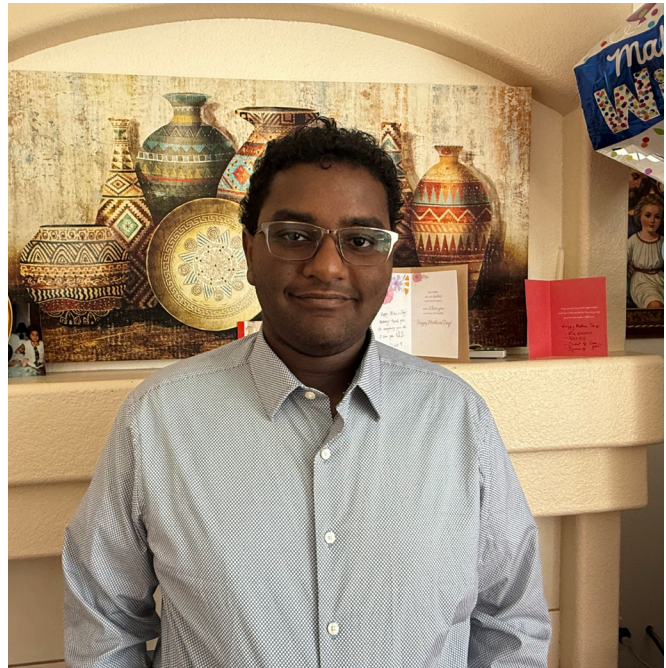
I have noticed that my learning difference or disability has opened up something new for me. I value and appreciate everyone who understands my condition and tries to be helpful. I like to be in class with others who have learning disabilities or differences. We are all in the same boat. Although our disabilities are different, we all have the same goal to succeed. Everyone deserves the same opportunity I have. With all the limitations of having autism, I am striving successfully.

Sources:

1. <https://time.com/7210039/what-is-dei-trump-executive-order-companies-diversity-efforts/>
2. <https://news.santarosa.edu/srjc-college-career-program-ranked-most-successful-california>

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What strategies does Adonay use to navigate his challenges?
2. How is his school supportive? Be specific.
3. What state agency funds Adonay's program? What do you think should be the role of state and federal agencies in supporting this type of programming?



Adonay Kubrom is a student in the C2C Program at Santa Rosa Junior College in Petaluma, California. He is known for his hard work and his eagerness to apply his skills in the workplace. Outside of work, he enjoys doing physical activities, writing explanations, reading books, watching movies, and playing video games. He is particularly interested in performing science experiments.



What Is Autistic Identity?

Autistic identity is about how autistic people understand themselves. Autistic people have distinct neurological profiles that include how they communicate, process sensory information, and interact with the world. Many autistic people view autism as part of their identity rather than something that needs to be fixed. The autistic community values acceptance, accommodation, and recognizing autistic people's unique strengths.

Source: Andjela Kaur, editorial board member