



From the Inside - Raising, teaching, loving an autistic child

Fiona van Dokkum

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Autism is a strange beast. There's no getting away from it.

Understanding it comes with time, but only those who actually have an autistic child and have to live with the condition day in and day out, really know what it means.

This book is not about a miracle cure. It is about dedication and hard work, about strength in adversity, and most of all, about common sense. Believing that my son had enormous potential to learn and unable to find an education for him in which I believed, I took it upon myself to teach him, my way. Connecting, day after day, with the beautiful mind of my autistic child was definitely one of the most exciting and rewarding times of my life.

This is our story.

About the Author

Fiona van Dokkum was born in Surrey and grew up in Sussex, England. Educated at Michael Hall School, she was a quiet, self-contained, hugely creative child with a passion for animals, sewing, reading, and writing.

Finishing school in Cape Town, South Africa, Fiona toyed with the idea of going to university to study music (she played violin and piano), but was drawn in equal measure to archaeology and drama. A series of aptitude tests recommended she find a career working with plants or animals.

Instead, she went to Secretarial College and became a Legal Secretary. In her twenties, Fiona moved to Edinburgh with her Border Collie, Badger, where she lived and worked for over two years. There, living 6,000 miles away from her family, she was presented with the perfect opportunity to indulge her love of the English language by writing long and descriptive letters home. She eventually realised, however, that she was utterly miserable and couldn't wait to get back to Cape Town.

Today, Fiona lives with her husband, Neil, and their two sons, Rory and Ian, on a mountainside in County Waterford, enjoying the "best view in the world."

There, she writes, tends house, keeps bees and takes daily walks with the family's manic black and white Lurcher, Daisy.

Her first book, *I Love My Bees*, was published in 2010 by Northern Bee Books. Her most recent attempt at fiction, a short novel entitled *And a Raven named Horatio*, is available on its own blog.

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