


A NeuroInclusive Story for Adults

ARGUING OR JOINT TROUBLESHOOTING?

*Stay tuned for free PDF downloads of all
NeuroInclusive Stories at
NeuroClastic.com*



The background is a solid teal color. It is decorated with numerous overlapping circles of varying sizes and orientations. Some circles are dark, almost black, with a metallic sheen and visible reflections, while others are lighter, appearing as semi-transparent or frosted teal. The circles are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured, bokeh-like effect.

Autistic people are
chronic overthinkers.
We overthink about
overthinking and care
about details most
people can overlook.

@NEUROCLASTIC



We also have a deep sense of justice. We see how all things are interrelated. For this reason, thinking is a constant and taxing exercise in processing. Even the smallest decisions can be paralyzing. It is extremely helpful to have a friend help us to process our thoughts.

Enter joint troubleshooting...

@NEUROCLASTIC

Joint Troubleshooting

Joint troubleshooting is the act of working through your thoughts with another person. For those who think deeply, it is a social way to process what's on your mind with the input of another person (or people) who may be able to lend their own perspective to the discussion.

@NeuroClastic

Argument



For the purpose of this slideshow, an argument will be defined as a relational argument, not a formal debate, and is seen as negative or unproductive interaction.

What's the difference?

Relational Argument

- ✓ An attempt to persuade the other person to feel or think a certain way
- ✓ Seeks to invalidate by critically dismissing counterpoints
- ✓ Is competitive rhetoric seeking to “win” or cause the other to “lose”
- ✓ Often antagonistic, contentious, and passive aggressive; uses character assaults, gaslighting, or insults

Joint Troubleshooting

- ✗ An attempt to socially explore all angles so everyone can have an informed perspective
- ✗ Seeks to provide factual input or troubleshooting on a given topic & receive counterpoints
- ✗ Is collaborative & sees the exercise in rhetoric as mutually beneficial
- ✗ Is not antagonistic but can be perceived that way; does not use value judgements, insults, or manipulation

ANDREW SAYS:

It's not full yet. I'll run it after dinner.

I'll wash those, too.

Do you know how many gallons of water a dishwasher uses per load?

I'm not arguing!



BETSY HEARS:

What you want is not important to me, even if it is a simple task.

I'll do anything to avoid giving you what you need or want.

I will gaslight you about everything and blame you for climate change for asking for a simple favor.

I won't even admit to you that I am arguing with you right now. I'll make you think you're crazy.

BETSY SAYS:

Run the dishwasher.



Why do you have to argue every little thing?



Do you know how exhausting you are?



You only think of yourself!



ANDREW HEARS:

I need dishes washed.

You need to try harder to express yourself.

I dislike you so much I can't even hear you out.

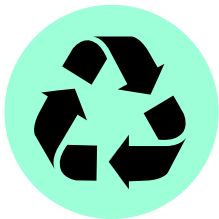
You need to try harder to overthink everything because you still get everything wrong.

AN ANALYSIS

Joint Troubleshooting



Andrew was not trying to be difficult, but he can't override his values that quickly. He does not realize Betsy-- who has the same values-- does not take them as seriously as he does.



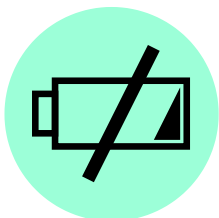
Betsy cares about the environment, but she does not see running the dishwasher every once in a while as a big deal.



Betsy projects motives Andrew does not have (gaslighting, passive aggression). This puts him in the defensive position of having to explain that he is not trying to be argumentative.



Both Betsy and Andrew are victims of a society that fails to explain the differences in Autistic communication or how to navigate them.



Betsy finds Andrew's overthinking to be exhausting. To be honest, Andrew is exhausted by it, too. That's why his conversation style is joint troubleshooting.

Why People Read Joint Troubleshooting as Arguing

PROMPT EXHAUSTION

1

It is exhausting and hard for people who are wired against direct conversation to be so direct. They are wired to feel direct communication is hostile, so they feel like they have to be "mean" to be so direct.

THEY ARE UNAWARE

It is not possible to truly intuit how someone who thinks differently needs to process and interact. It can only be learned like a second language.

2

THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO VALUES

They are not as hard on themselves about the morality of every action or decision they make, and it's hard to imagine other people are so dedicated. (eg, "white lies," wasting water, not laughing at bigoted jokes, correcting harmful misinformation, etc.)

3

4

INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE

For a variety of reasons, quality information about Autistic adults is not readily available to the mainstream.

You Be the Referee

A SOCIAL THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



Stay tuned for insights about this scenario and a new concept that might break your brain.

FROM @NEUROCLASTIC



BETSY & ANDREW

Betsy plans to cook soon as has been paying bills when Andrew walks into the kitchen. She asks Andrew to start the dishwasher.

Then this happens.

Andrew: It's not full yet. I'll run it after dinner.

Betsy: I need the plates for dinner. Just run it.

Andrew: I'll wash the plates in the sink.

Betsy: I also need the spatula and serving spoons.

Andrew: I'll wash those, too.

Betsy: Why do you have to argue every little thing? I could have done it myself by the time it took to beg you to do one simple thing to contribute around here. I don't want to create a list of what dishes I'll need.

BETSY & ANDREW

...CONTINUED



Andrew: Do you know how many gallons of water a dishwasher uses per load?

Betsy: There you go again! Do you know how exhausting you are? You argue about everything under the sun!

Andrew: I'm not arguing!

Betsy: You are arguing about not arguing! What is wrong with you? You can't even admit what you're doing right now. You only think of yourself!

@NEUROCLASTIC





WHAT
HAPPENED
HERE?

