

IN A DIFFERENT KEY:
THE AUTISM UNDERSTANDING TOOLKIT

NEUROTYPICAL MISCUES



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

(suggested)

The documentary *IN A DIFFERENT KEY* includes a few appearances by one of the filmmakers, whose name is Caren. And also her son, Mickey. Caren knows Mickey better than anyone in the world, probably, because she raised him, and as you'll see, she loves and cares about him so much. But she included two little stories in the movie demonstrating how even she can make mistakes about what Mickey needs and what he wants. As she has said many times, Mickey is teaching her a lot of the time, instead of the other way around. So here are two scenes, one right after the other, showing some times she was the one who had to learn. Notice how easy it can be to come up with the wrong assumptions about what a person might want, in two completely separate situations, with different premises in each case.

KEY THEMES

- Stumbling blocks to communication between autistic and neurotypical people
- The need to take in all available cues from an autistic person
- The need to adjust to such cues
- The problem with making assumptions about what an autistic person might want

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What did Caren misunderstand about Mickey's connection to cats?

How is that different from her expectations at the graduation?

Did he send any signals about his true feelings about getting a cat?

What did Caren learn about Mickey and cats?

Why did she encourage him to stick it out at the graduation?

What do you think about what Mickey did with his gown?