

## A no hope day dreamer (done okay)

As a boy I dreamed of being a man,  
In a galaxy far, far away, I fought injustice,  
Defeating evil and championing the weak,  
With my trusty sword of justice.

A swashbuckling hero, what a joke,  
Blonde curly hair and a slender physique  
I didn't fit in as a mod or a rocker,  
Too different, outwardly shy, and meek.

A happy, polite little boy,  
Always friendly and warm,  
But inside fighting demons,  
Unable to conform or perform.

Smart as a button,  
Lots of social flitting,  
A dreamer not an achiever,  
Awkwardly never really fitting.

School was a bore,  
I never was challenged,  
I could comprehend,  
More than anyone imagined.

My early year's teacher, laid the foundations,  
Supportive, caring but quickly changed tack,  
Assigning labels to unusual pupils,  
I was known to all teachers as Idle Jack.

I couldn't spell,  
Co-ordination a trial,  
My teacher's perception,  
Simply a lazy child, on file.

I did not fully understand,  
What was expected of me,  
Branded and labelled in class,  
Academic failure almost a certainty.

But I was so far ahead,  
Of what they were teaching,  
But on paper I couldn't articulate,  
Expressive communication illusively missing.

My short-term memory,  
Often betrayed me,  
Lavished with punishment,  
Ridicule, pain, outright cockamammy.

Formulative schooling defining,  
Authority figures = punitive measures,  
Detained after school, over lunch, and breaks,  
Excluded from sports and all other pleasures.

The teacher's narrative perpetuated,  
Confirmation biases the easiest trail,  
Even I started to believe,  
I was destined to fail.

Too many daydreams,  
My parents despised me,  
My stated ambitions,  
Misaligned with reality.

At 14 something clicked,  
I started to get it,  
But to rescue my schooling,  
Not quickly enough, I admit.

I began to understand,  
In ways I cannot explain,  
The previously elusive,  
Hidden rules of the game.

I found inclusion in drama,  
Imagination rewarded, what a transformer,  
My creativity encouraged,  
Thanks to Youth Theatre Yorkshire.

I thrived and I grew,  
Come on let's admit it,  
I was still a misfit,  
But I loved every minute.

It was too late for school,  
That window had gone,  
Leaving a system that rewarded average,  
A brighter future had started to dawn.

The first in my family,  
to get a degree,  
But not only one,  
Now I've got three!

I've overcome setbacks,  
Like not fitting in,  
Or holding down jobs,  
While finding my thing.

In my 40's came diagnosis,  
Some eye-opening revelations,  
Dyslexia, dyspraxia, and ADHD,  
Finally, explanations.

To top it all off when almost 50,  
A further insight, really enlightening,  
I'm also autistic,  
This was like lightning.

My Johari blind-spot shrinks,  
Transcendence, debunking others belie,  
Self-aware, and happy with me,  
Through lived experiences, my resilience high.

I see patterns, connections,  
And order in chaos – hello,  
I'm an expert in leadership,  
By God I'm a Fellow!

I have laboured intensely,  
Ignored those who doubt me,  
I've achieved more than I dreamed,  
Always grateful to those who helped me.

So now as a man,  
Grounded in reality,  
I forgive all my quirks,  
And grow with vitality.

I'm still not a swashbuckling hero,  
Definitely not a poet amongst us,  
But I fight for the meek,  
For equality and justice.

I use my mind, and my knowledge  
My privilege as an autistic employee,  
To call out bad practice,  
And champion inclusivity.

It will be a long road,  
Addressing misconceptions and stigma,  
The fruits of my labour,  
In my lifetime may remain an enigma.

But I am proud making ground,  
By sharing my story,  
Championing the fight of Neurominorities,  
Pushing for equity and inclusion, not glory.

For kids and for parents,  
For teachers and bosses,  
Embrace our differences,  
And celebrate our successes.

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