



What they forgot to mention...

by Sandy Sotzen

I remember the day of my son's diagnosis of Autism as if it were yesterday. The tone in the doctor's voice, the silence in the room, the words "lifelong disability, no cure, "I'm sorry," still sting when I allow myself to reflect on that day.

But I have paused on occasions, too numerous to count and think. "Someone should've mentioned that this would be part of the package" when my child was diagnosed with Autism.

Someone forgot to mention that I would listen to my child's simple utterances or attempted approximations as if he were a world leader giving the speech of a lifetime. I could never have imagined the worth of a single word despite, the fact that I may never hear it again.

Someone forgot to mention that when my son was finally potty trained at age 9, there would be very few people who would understand the significance of such an accomplishment and even fewer with whom I could actually share it with. Accomplishments of any size, their true worth known only to me, would bring quiet celebrations between my son and me.

Someone should have mentioned that Autism is messy!!! That wall paper is meant to be shredded, bathrooms are designed to be flooded, walls are bare in order to smear stuff on them, washable paint really isn't and that more food will actually be crushed and dropped, than eaten.

I wish someone would've mentioned that Autism is EXTREMELY expensive!!! Doctors, therapists, medications, supplements, conferences and sensory equipment are only the tip of the iceberg. I could not have guessed that it would be my child's disability that allowed people to cross our path in life that otherwise would not have and that such people would respond to a child in need.

Someone should have mentioned that each year your child with Autism initiates or engages in a reciprocal hug, that feeling that you had when you held them for the first time comes back time and time again.

What they forgot to mention the day my son was diagnosed with Autism is that the triumphs over this disability would far outweigh the tears, that laughter would eventually ease the sense of loss and that sheer faith would allow me and millions of other parents to fall into bed exhausted each night..... only to get up the next day..... eager to discover... **what else they forgot to mention.**