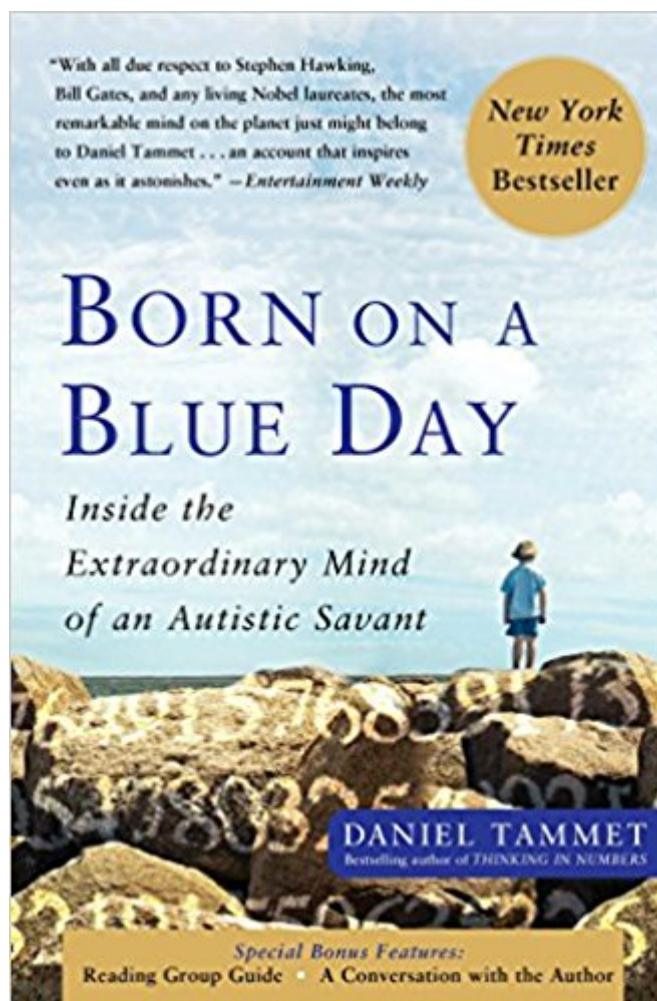


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Born On A Blue Day: Inside The Extraordinary Mind Of An Autistic Savant



Synopsis

A journey into one of the most fascinating minds alive today—guided by the owner himself. Bestselling author Daniel Tammet (*Thinking in Numbers*) is virtually unique among people who have severe autistic disorders in that he is capable of living a fully independent life and able to explain what is happening inside his head. He sees numbers as shapes, colors, and textures, and he can perform extraordinary calculations in his head. He can learn to speak new languages fluently, from scratch, in a week. In 2004, he memorized and recited more than 22,000 digits of pi, setting a record. He has savant syndrome, an extremely rare condition that gives him the most unimaginable mental powers, much like those portrayed by Dustin Hoffman in the film *Rain Man*. Fascinating and inspiring, *Born on a Blue Day* explores what it's like to be special and gives us an insight into what makes us all human—our minds.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Free Press; Reprint edition (October 16, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416549013

ISBN-13: 978-1416549017

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 395 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #31,287 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Children's Health > Autism & Asperger's Syndrome #28 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Special Needs #41 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Nervous System

Customer Reviews

This unique first-person account offers a window into the mind of a high-functioning, 27-year-old British autistic savant with Asperger's syndrome. Tammet's ability to think abstractly, deviate from routine, and empathize, interact and communicate with others is impaired, yet he's capable of incredible feats of memorization and mental calculation. Besides being able to effortlessly multiply and divide huge sums in his head with the speed and accuracy of a computer, Tammet, the subject of the 2005 documentary *Brainman*, learned Icelandic in a single week and recited the number pi up to the 22,514th digit, breaking the European record. He also experiences synesthesia, an unusual

neurological syndrome that enables him to experience numbers and words as "shapes, colors, textures and motions." Tammet traces his life from a frustrating, withdrawn childhood and adolescence to his adult achievements, which include teaching in Lithuania, achieving financial independence with an educational Web site and sustaining a long-term romantic relationship. As one of only about 50 people living today with synesthesia and autism, Tammet's condition is intriguing to researchers; his ability to express himself clearly and with a surprisingly engaging tone (given his symptoms) makes for an account that will intrigue others as well. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review Although Tammet is only 27, his autobiography is as fascinating as Benjamin Franklin's and John Stuart Mill's, both of which are, like his, about the growth of a mind. Not that Tammet is a scientist-statesman or philosopher. He is an autistic savant who can perform hefty arithmetical calculations at lightning speed and acquire speaking competency in a previously unknown language in mere days (the latter capability he used to create the Web-based language-learning systems with which he supports himself). More socially competent and independent than the autistic savant famously played by Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man*, Tammet shares his peers' strong preferences for routine, peace and quiet, private space, and literalness, as well as aversion to chance occurrences, aural and informational noise, and figurative language (despite his arithmetical gift, he can't do algebra; he reads a lot but never fiction). He learned fellowship very gradually and says he couldn't really acknowledge his eight siblings until he grew up. He also writes some of the clearest prose this side of Hemingway; he tells his story with such concentration, precision, and simplicity that his familial poverty, schooling as a "mainstreamed" student, self-realization as gay, and embracing of Christianity prove as enthralling as they are, ultimately, normal. Ray Olson Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Fascinating. This book gave me an inside look into the mind of an autistic savant, also I have a better understanding of epilepsy now. It amazes me how Daniel Tammet sees numbers as colors and shapes. I read the whole book in one session. Read this book if you are looking to be inspired and are looking to explore new perspectives of people with disabilities and how they see the world. I find it interesting how he can describe his mathematical abilities so clearly.

After seeing this appealing young man on a 60 minutes video clip, I bought the book to learn more about him. In the tv interview, I found it hard to believe that he was particularly autistic, but his memoir convinces me that, yeah, he is pretty autistic. In spite of his high-functioning, he does have fairly serious difficulties with normal living. He is able to make a living, of a sort, though in a somewhat sheltered environment. He has fallen in love and the warmth of his affection towards his partner and towards his family members is particularly touching since he seems so naive and had to actively learn to be cognizant of other people and their feelings. But in addition to overcoming the limitations of autism, he also has very impressive savant abilities. Under controlled conditions, he has proven that he can memorize thousands and thousands of digits of pi and that he can learn the fundamentals of the vocabulary and grammar of an unfamiliar language in less than a week. (I do disagree that Icelandic was a stunningly difficult language choice. It's not a bad choice, since it's a language that few people know any little snippets of. But it is actually related to Old English and is nowhere near as unrelated or difficult as Vietnamese or Navajo would be for an English-speaker.) The story is sweetly and gently told, reflecting the mind of a sweet and gentle guy with a highly unusual mind. And the implications of savant abilities continue to suggest that our minds are far different than we might suspect.

In a literary era of memoir, it takes a lot to stand out. This book does so. The prose is indicative of the writer's unique world view and conveys an interesting life story.

interesting first person account of asperger's syndrome. well written kept my attention

We meet people every day and everyone is different. Daniel allows us to look out on the world through his eyes. In an age of hate and intolerance, the more we see life through others' eyes, the more accepting we become. Anyone who enjoys autobiographies, those with friends or family on the autism spectrum, those in a service related field all would enjoy this remarkable book.

The author describes his life, the successes and challenges, so the reader gains a perspective on autism and aspergers.

Interesting, esp. his early years. Makes it clear that we have a lot to learn about the brain.

Daniel Tammet is a gifted man who happens to be an autistic savant. He has overcome his

hardships--including epilepsy--and has learned to excel in life. He is now socially and financially independent, has traveled to many countries and has found love. Daniel is from Kent, England and is the oldest of Jennifer and Kevin's four boys and five girls. His parent's patience and unconditional love have made a miraculous difference in his ability to successfully function in a world he had to learn to participate in. Daniel loves numbers and sees them differently from the masses. He sees them as patterns and colors. Additionally, his memory is astonishing. In support of a fundraiser to help those with epilepsy, he memorized over 25,000 decimal points of PI, reciting them aloud in front of a large crowd in a feat that took over five hours. He has the unique ability to quickly grasp the most difficult of languages. He learned the considerably difficult language, Icelandic in about a week and participated in interviews using that language. He even invented his own language. This inspiring exceptionally written life story is truly amazing. Losing track of time, once I flipped the first page I could not put this mesmerizing 226-page story down until I finished it. Whether you are in a position to associate with or around people on the autistic spectrum or not, you will be hard pressed to find a book more interesting than this one written by a person with autism. Enjoy!

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