

Surrounded By Idiots

When you are as socially awkward as I, you often end up drawn to anything that might help you navigate the world with a bit more grace and stop you making a blunder fool of yourself. With *Surrounded By Idiots* in my hand, I felt sure I was going to understand the entire western society and as such, would be able to utilise this knowledge to function much better in it.

I was impressed with the straight forward concept of categorising people to make understanding how to conduct myself to suit situations, particularly for work. As an Aspergian I am fully aware (as my previous boss – who is now a client) I can come off as a little odd. I've tried all sorts to rectify this to little avail. I was convinced this simplified method would give me the tools I needed to present myself more favourably.

It didn't go well.

Before I even got to the grit, it became clear that from a psychological point of view, it was too specific. References were made to how people will straddle two or three colours but because of this it did make the information at times contradictory. The recommendations on how to deal with others was also at times condescending or irrelevant. At no point before starting to read this had I anticipated having to parent co-workers or clients and frankly, I still don't. There was little in the way of explaining the best ways to adjust one's own communication styles and methods to suit the situation, but a lot on levels of volatility and how to tell others to behave dependant on their colour.

There's also the overarching issue with generalising too far. Putting someone into a group because they are ballys and driven, quiet and focused, nervous and people pleasers or self-centred and irresponsible (he did at points mention their strengths too) means that when you suggest they span two or two of these groups, the advice you are sharing becomes obsolete. Not that I much fancy trying to tell other people how to behave. That's their prerogative, I just want to know the most productive way to work with them.

I'm still working on that with the same knowledge as before.

It did make me appreciate though how we really can't put people in boxes.