



## Proud Aspy Mom Newsletter | July 2021

### Never Say Never!



### What Does Autism Look Like?



I feel I have constant angels around me- always ready to enlighten me about vast possibilities. Last week I toured the Morean Arts Clay Center and struck up a conversation on the amazing progress of the arts in general in our beautiful city. One comment led to another and before I knew it the conversation turned toward Autism- as it often does with me. I shared how instrumental the Morean Arts Center summer school programs were to my daughter in the past and gave an update on her progress.

Our conversation turned to that space where you know there is a higher presence. "I remember you and your story and you know there are no accidents. I have something to share." We continued the tour and chatted on

the beautiful pieces at the Center and finally she asked if I knew Jennifer Msumba. I had not met this young lady or heard about her but after she told me I decided I must share!

Jennifer Msumba is a film director, musician, graphic designer, writer, creative spirit and a champion for those who are on the Spectrum. She recently won "Best Short" for her film, The Fish Don't Care When It Rains. It is a candid story about how she feels as a "human being" and her beliefs about where she fits in society. Jennifer gently tells how it felt to move from group home to group home and the lack of acceptance she felt. She also accepts responsibility for what she could do to engage in society more. In less than five minutes she is able to articulate what it feels like to live with anxiety, loneliness and social difficulties through her choice of music, artistic images and of course her voice.

The quote that resonated with me the most was- "It was not my time in the sun..." We all have challenges and have to accept when it is not our time to shine, but when it is we must be willing to rise. It appears Jennifer's time is now. During my chat at the Morean I learned that Pinellas County Film Commissioner and Sunscreen Film Festival Founder, Tony Armer opened the door wider for Jennifer. Her next film, "Like the Girls Who Wear Pink" was filmed at the Morean.

Jennifer- although I do not know you - I cannot wait to see you rise to your full potential-YOU ARE AN INSPIRATION



### **Bay Area autistic filmmaker gets professional help with next project**

Jennifer Msumba will shoot her next film on June 26

[Click To Watch The Film](#)

[Click To Watch The Interview](#)



### **Tony Armer - Sunscreen Film Festival**

Tony Armer is the Film Commissioner for St. Petersburg Clearwater (Pinellas County) FL, an Award Winning Filmmaker and the Founder and Former Executive Director of the internationally acclaimed Sunscreen Film Festival.

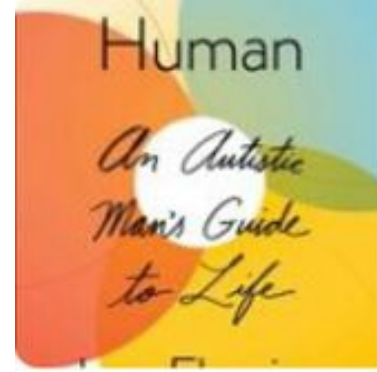
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## **We Share a Similar Path**

Ironically, when I came home from the Morean I found a special note from a colleague and mentor who still uses "snail mail" to communicate. I love receiving letters because it reminds me that we share a similar path and

often we just want to truly connect. The letter contained a news article on Jory Fleming, an author, Oxford student and Rhodes Scholar-who yes also has Autism Spectrum Disorder. I was moved by this article for several reasons. First, because my colleague recognized my need to see those with ASD in all manners. Second, because the author focused on how he sees others and not how others see him and finally, because I am self-professed nerd and Oxford is incredibly impressive!

Jory Fleming reminds me that "human beings" search for social interactions, strive for emotional connection and face obstacles merging barriers. Like Jennifer, he appears to be incredibly candid about his issues with non-verbal cues and ability to "fit" in. He describes himself as an outsider looking in, which I relate to.



### **How to Be Human**

An unforgettable, unconventional narrative that examines the many ways to be fully human, told by the first young adult with autism to attend

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As much as I would like to say we understand each other, the truth is it takes patience, tolerance and a strong willingness to ACCEPT those who are different than us- even though we all share a similar path. The more we know the more we grow- right?



### **Jory Fleming Sees the Neurotypical World From an Outsider's Perspective**

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### **Jory Fleming Shares What It's Like Going Through Life With Autism In New Memoir : NPR - NPR.org**

NPR's Debbie Elliott speaks to Jory Fleming about his new book, *How to be Human — An Autistic Man's Guide to Life*. Fleming, who himself is autistic, co-wrote the book with Lyric Winik.

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This month I was reminded once again to NEVER SAY NEVER!

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Terry Marks, CEO of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance, talks about the comprehensive arts strategy for the city of St. Petersburg



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