



Practice Makes Perfect-It Really Does

I am constantly on the hunt for programs that enrich the lives of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Lately- my mind is in OVERDRIVE. It is such a balancing act.

- Do we give more support?
- Do we back off and let her fly?
- Do we simply listen and guide her?
- Do we gently persuade her?

For the record, we know the answer is a combination of both, but it is still very difficult.

My husband's friend, Professor Lyman Dukes III, a scholar at USF committed to special education advocacy recently shared a program at the St. Petersburg Campus that is changing lives.

USF Professor of Education Lyman Dukes III has received the Ronald E. Blosser Dedicated Service Award from the Association on Higher Education and


[Read the article](#)

The Eileen Hoffman Hafer U Matter Program, of which Dr. Dukes is the co-principal of provides a space for students with intellectual disabilities to grow and develop social skills prior to post-secondary education. Upon completion the students receive a certificate, but most importantly they gain essential life and career skills for this often-vulnerable period of life.

The U Matter program is funded in part from the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, ("FCSUA"). When I viewed the website, once again I was astonished about how many resources and information exist but are not readily known to the public. The FCSUA supports programs across like U Matter across the state to help institutions support on- campus college experiences.

Practice makes perfect-It Really Does! Our daughter's growth is a result of significant time and support from experts who put their time and energy into connecting her with appropriate resources.

FCUSA also supports families who care for loved ones. Check it out and spread the word!

Conference July 10-13, 2023



2023 Florida Postsecondary Education Program Planning Institute

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Whew! 30+ years and counting!



I realized this past weekend that I met the loves of my life some time ago. My

friendship circle. As many people know - because I literally say it ALL the time - I am a proud graduate of [Spelman College](#). This weekend was my 30th College Reunion. Returning to Atlanta feels like home. When I walk into the village of women who raised me, shared my journey or who I impacted I feel my most authentic self.

At SPELMAN

- **WE** support each other,
- **WE** nurture each other,
- **WE** lift each other up,
- **WE** celebrate each other's achievements,
- **WE** mourn together,
- **WE** encourage each other,
- **WE** just know that there is NO place on earth where **WE** thrive better than on these sacred grounds!

I must admit I generally have some trepidation when people REALLY ask about our journey with our Autistic daughter because some people express pity or give you the look of sadness. That is not the case with my Amazon crew! These [Spelman](#) women dig in. Instead, the discussion is

- **WHAT** are her strengths,
- **WHERE** have you seen the most growth,
- **HOW** are you supporting her overall development,
- **WHO** can we connect with to support her goals,
- **WHEN** is she coming back to Spelman.

It feels good to be a part of my amazing peers who made a choice to CHANGE the world.

Whew! 30+ years and counting!

[#gratefulbeyondmeasure](#)
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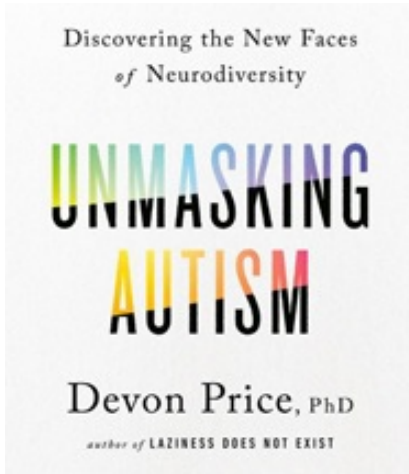
Reading is Fundamental - Pass It On!

Just when I think there is nothing more I can say about Autism - I learn, I have so much to learn. Recently I was asked again what Autism looks like on an adult. My response, I have NO idea. You see I spent the past 15 years focusing on Autism in children and teens from Pre-K through high school. I did not really think beyond the present year- so I have a lot of learning to do - particularly from our own daughter and our family.

The past few weeks have been interesting to say the least. This is the first summer where our daughter has not traveled to camp. The disruption in routine has not only impacted her, but it also changed our family space as well. We cannot just do what we did before. I mean we cannot just



say go here, do this, attend that, etc. She says no and firmly means NO with a plethora or reasons why she is not interested. Moreover, it is so interesting to watch our daughter navigate life and triage situations. My husband, other daughter and I have learned to be patient when we can as our daughter shares her world with us. As sensitive as we each our to her- it is in fact her world.



A colleague shared the book, Discovering the New Faces of Neurodiversity, Unmasking Autism.

The author, Dr. Devon Price attempts to explain some of the nuances of neurodiversity which continue to baffle those who share space with an autistic person. Of course, we can never truly understand someone else's journey- but we can certainly appreciate it more when we have context.

Reading is fundamental - pass it on!

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