

Hi my name is joe. I was diagnosed with aspergers in 2013. Now it is known as autism spectrum disorder. I was born in Nashville tennessee. and spent my childhood and early teenage years in a small town near nashville. I knew I was a little different as a kid. I have another condition called panhypopituitarism. and i had to take medicine and go to the doctor a lot. Eventually my parents got divorced and I lived with my mom for a few years. It was very hard being away from my dad because I was very close to him. Unfortunately we had a house fire and I got to live with my dad here in michigan. and i have lived with him ever since. Thankfully nobody was hurt in the fire. and my mom still lives in tennessee.

When I moved up here I struggled in school a lot. I lost all my friends from tennessee. and it was hard to make new ones. classes got harder. and my dad was away a lot because he drove a bus and would be gone for days at a time sometimes. A lot of the staff thought I was lazy. but i just didn't understand a lot of the things they taught me. So I dropped out. Eventually we talked to some people and I joined a program for people with learning disabilities. and their psychiatrist diagnosed me with aspergers. I was so relieved to understand why I act or think the way I do.

A few years later I met a great woman named lisa. She runs a program and charity for people with autism and their parents. i love microphones and talking on them. so i thought she could help me get some public speaking events to speak at. and ever since then i have been her sidekick. I go to events with her and talk to people about autism. I tell them what it's like and what needs to be done to help us. i have spoken at so many events including the following. doing an interview on 99.5 wycd. i actually got to meet lady antebellum on the phone. I have been on tv channel 7 in detroit. I have spoken at police training for autism. I helped the police understand autism from my view. I helped raise money for charity. I also volunteer at Meijer and make announcements to the store. and my biggest event was speaking at the Detroit Pistons last year. (I will be linking some of these events below the essay. I don't have a video for everything.)

I have had many parents tell me how I have helped them and their kids. one parent said that her kid cried because he wants to be just like me when he grows up. I have written stories from an autistic person's point of view. and I try to answer any questions people have about autism. i have my own facebook group called puzzle joe. where I try to answer people's questions or post stuff relating to autism. I'm very proud of my autism. and even though it does have its own issues. I couldn't imagine being myself without it. Thank you for reading and have a blessed day.

this first link is for my announcing at the pistons.