

Start Here:



Hard truths for those who care.

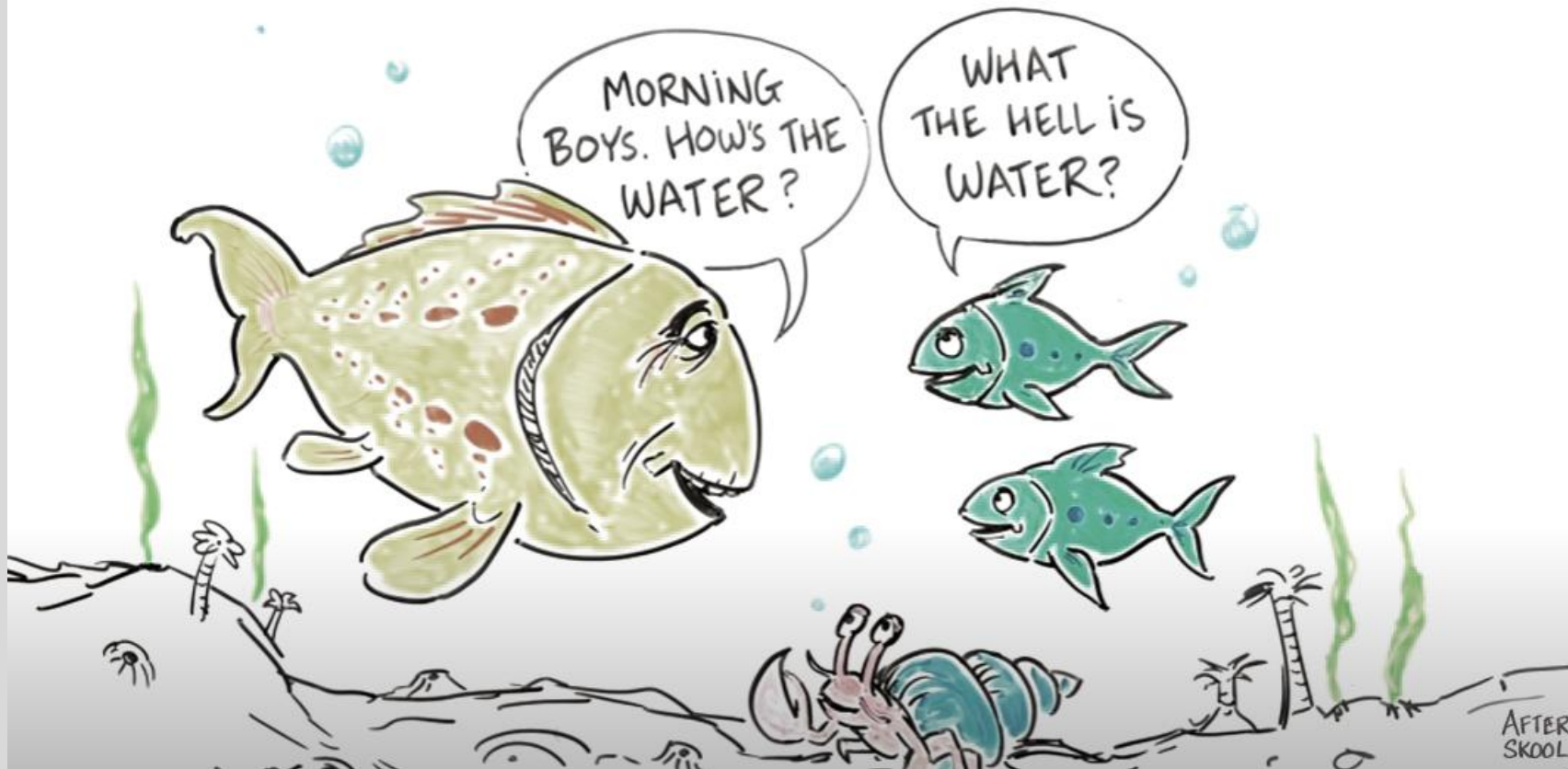
What is Water?

“Two young fish who are swimming along encounter an older fish. The older fish asks, ‘How's the water?’ The young fish swim on, and eventually, one of them asks, ‘What the hell is water?’

The most obvious, important realities are often the hardest to see and talk about. We have to keep reminding ourselves over and over: ‘This is water, this is water.’”

David Foster Wallace
American Novelist





Autism, like water to fish, is the invisible medium through which one experiences life, ever-present yet often unnoticed.

One can forget they have autism because it's not separate from them — it's simply how they are, shaping every thought and interaction.

The moment of remembering (this is water) is not a flaw, but a powerful realization that allows us to embrace and harness our unique reality.

**Low Support Needs
(outside limbo)**

- *More independence in daily life.*
- *Less need for external support.*
- *Social differences might be more “socially acceptable” (seen as quirky or unique).*
- *Easier access to opportunities like jobs, education, and relationships.*

**AUTISTIC
LIMBO**

**High Support Needs
(outside limbo)**

- *Struggles are obvious, so validation is more immediate.*
- *Society is quicker to acknowledge needs and offer support.*
- *Less pressure to “pass” as neurotypical.*
- *Struggles are less likely to be dismissed as laziness or weakness.*

I Need Help...To Get Help.

Society tells me to hide my disability.

Doctors tell me to prove my disability.



I am either:
"too much"
or
"not enough".

Expected to be invisible and visible at the same time.

Facts and Laws Supporting the Proposed Action(s):

WIC Section 4512 and 17 CCR 54000 and 54001

Although Russell has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, a multidisciplinary team reviewed all assessments and reports and determined Russell is not substantially disabled by that condition.

Can, rather than can't

MRN: 482416

Title: Clinic Note - Clinic Outpt Report (Modified)

Performed by I [REDACTED]

Performed Date 03/26/2003 09:56

RUSSELL, LEHMANN

DO [REDACTED]

Document Date 03/19/2003 00:00

Verified By I [REDACTED]

Verified Date 2003-03-19 00:00:00

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Dr. [REDACTED] reports that Russell continues to take in [REDACTED] and has had EKG levels done. They worked on imaginal exposure and exposure to bugs. They worked on naming OCD "kidnapper." He suggests that Russell should not engage in flooding tasks but gradual exposure and to develop the capacity to wait out anxiety in the midst of exposure tasks. Making the point that Russell's anxiety will peak and dissipate within 20-90 minutes, exposure tasks should occur up to 20 minutes. They used the fear thermometer, asking Russell to color in levels of fear during tasks. He suggests that Russell needs to experience success and commitment and to learn that he has a choice in behaviors.

obsessive-compulsive disorder (300.30), and separation anxiety disorder (309.21). Present with the treating team for 6 weeks, discharge planning and work on consent

Dr. [REDACTED] at Mt. Baker, Friday, 10 AM, an inpatient psychiatric unit. [REDACTED]

The staff on the unit discussed Russell's 6-week treatment on the unit.

Dr. [REDACTED] reports that Russell continues to take in [REDACTED] and has had EKG levels done. They worked on imaginal exposure and exposure to bugs. They worked on naming OCD "kidnapper." He suggests that Russell should not engage in flooding tasks but gradual exposure and to develop the capacity to wait out anxiety in the midst of exposure tasks. Making the point that Russell's anxiety will peak and dissipate within 20-90 minutes, exposure tasks should occur up to 20 minutes. They used the fear thermometer, asking Russell to color in levels of fear during tasks. He suggests that Russell needs to experience success and commitment and to learn that he has a choice in behaviors.

**“All the water in the world cannot drown you
unless it gets inside of you.”**



*Eleanor Roosevelt, October 11, 1884 – November
7, 1962*

Longest-serving first lady from 1933 to 1945.

***A Pit to
me***



Self-Injurious Behavior (SIB)

In 2020, a comprehensive meta-analysis* found that 42% of individuals with autism engage in self-injurious behaviors.

The most common forms of self-injury include:

- Hand-hitting: 23%
- Head-banging: 20%
- Self-biting: 17%
- Self-scratching: 12%
- Hair-pulling: 10%
- Self-cutting: 3%

* Hartley, D. C. S., & Sikora, D. M. (2020). Prevalence of self-injurious behavior in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50(2), 589-609.

Crisis: What Is It?



For many years in English the word was most commonly applied to the climax of a disease. "Turning point in a disease, that change which indicates recovery or death" (used as such by Hippocrates and Galen)

Use of non-medical sense occurred in the early 1600's: "Vitaly important or decisive state of things, point at which change must come, for better or worse"

A parting of the ways - a point of uncertainty before events move on

A German term "mid-life crisis" is *Torschlusspanik*, literally "shut-door-panic," the fear of being on the wrong side of a closing gate

Ask Yourself

The gate is closing, are we going to be on the same side, or opposing sides?



Pre-Crisis: It Starts with You

- Situational Awareness: Being mindful of your own self and what is present and happening around you
- "Observe and Orient" in lieu of going into "fix it" mode. Read the room and assess safety.
- Fix your Mindset: Calm yourself and remain calm
- Monitor your body language, tone and speed of communication



Crisis

- Be aware of high status/low status dynamics and adjust accordingly
- Enter my world by asking simple “yes” or “no” questions
- Share a vulnerability of yours first (ask if it’s okay in case of auditory overload) to initiate trust
- Observe my eyes, they have much to say
- Read my body language! Am I stiff? Is my hood on? Am I biting my nails or fidgeting? Avoiding eye contact? Am I crying?
- Be aware of the fluidity of the human condition, and the situational variables that affect the spectrum of emotions and functioning levels
- Put yourself in my shoes. What would you need in a similar moment of despair?

Ideas for Your Crisis Response "Kit"

- Coloring books, paper, crayons
- Container of beads, beans
- Sensory materials (but no noise or blinking lights)
- Weighted lap pad
- Fuzzy/soft blanket
- Noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs
- UNO cards
- Tic-Tacs, mints, gum, etc. (mint flavor)
- Bottled water for grounding and rehydrating (crises are exhausting)
- Instant hot/cold packs for sensory grounding.

Examples of Sensory/Soothing/ Grounding

- Modify the environment – reduce sensory stimulation
- Use your voice – repetitive, rhythmic
- Ex: say the person's name, soothing phrases
- Model simple rhythmic body movements – deep breaths, feet on the floor, rocking, drumming, walking
- Rubbing hands together or light pressure to hands
- Gently touching lips with two fingers or applying Chapstick (stimulate parasympathetic nerve fibers to promote homeostasis)
- Introduce a familiar, soothing object
- Repetitive movement of hands -Running hands through water, sand, beans
- Responder can name categories of things – colors, seasons, animals
- Listen to music or soothing sounds

Spoken Word Poem

"Triggered"





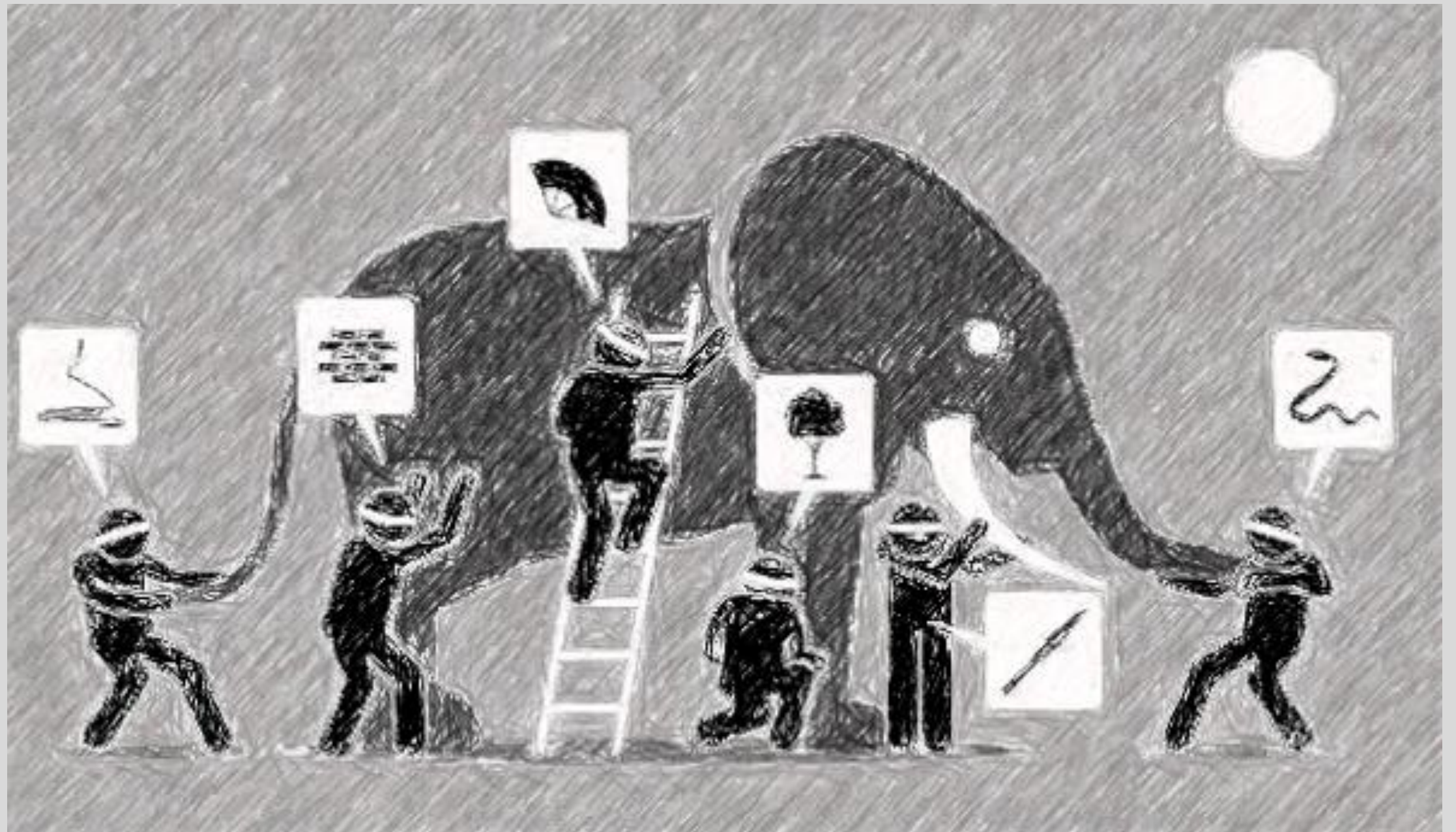
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Under the microscope, even the clean edge of a knife looks ragged.

—Alan Watts

Humans have a tendency to claim absolute truth based on their limited, subjective experience as they ignore other people's limited, subjective experiences which may be equally true.







Keynotes, trainings, and consultations

Let's change the world... together!



Contact me at:
www.RussL.co