



With the Light: Raising an Autistic Child

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A little effort goes a long way—that's what Sachiko, Honda-san, and Gunji-sensei learn as they struggle to work together to make life easier for the Special Education children. With the help of gadgets and the support of more people in their environment than meets the eye, Hikaru and Miyu become able to communicate better with the world around them. But when Hikaru's teen idol classmate sends some mothers into a flashbulb frenzy that causes Hikaru to panic, other parents begin to question his presence alongside "normal" students in the classroom. Hikaru's first school trip also ends in disaster, when he gets separated from the group, and Sachiko begins to worry that Hikaru is losing his hard-fought place in society.

With the Light: Raising an Autistic Child Details

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From Reader Review With the Light: Raising an Autistic Child for online ebook

Rachel says

A very thorough look into what it takes (mentally, emotionally, etc.) to raise autistic children, what autism is, and even how to work with and help these kids and their caregivers. This is all discussed within the context of a slice-of-life narrative which follows the mother Sachiko Azuma, and her son Hikaru, as well as a cast of other parents, kids, teachers, and more. While some of the technology, and even methods may be a bit dated, and some aspects may not be as culturally relevant to westerners, overall it is an excellent work for those in a similar situation. Not only does it provide information that could actually be useful, it also gives readers a measure of reassurance; the character Sachiko is someone who experiences the same sort of thoughts and feelings that they do because she goes through similar situations. It takes enormous dedication and love to raise an autistic child, it can be a struggle, not just to keep them healthy and happy, but to communicate and connect with them. Creator Keiko Tobe gets this, and it is clear that she has done very thorough research into autism. Currently, there isn't really anything else like With the Light, so it is fortunate that it is such a superb work. This is a series that can be recommended to even those who have never read manga before. The illustrations are clean, the panels are easy enough to follow, there is a fair amount of text, and you can start with any volume because important plot and character points get reiterated.

Emilia P says

I wish the D.C. Library was better about buying whole series. Checked this out of Champaign and will send it back with my parents. -- I liked this because I am really starting to get a sense of how an autistic person learns and develops - at their own rate, but definitely impressively well and by way of many innovations devised by his caretakers here and there. The little family dramas and the personalities of other children in this book were pretty great too. As Hikaru grows older, his parents and teachers have more chances to figure out how to communicate with him, and so he is able to develop more in turn. And I'm finally starting to not hate the big-eyed manga style! I wonder what challenges 4 will bring!

Kelly says

Excellent! This book in the series covers 5th grade. Talks about the beginnings of puberty, peer relationships, and other changes our tweens experience. I love the opportunity to read more about what is happening to my son. Again, the book reminds me to appreciate how far we've come, forgive myself for small mistakes, and lean on others for support.

Donald Trump (Parody) says

Christ almighty, that Hikaru won't stop having these fits. Don't know what the hell those China people are feeding their kids. Probably no better than that Little Rocket Man, givin those skinny bastards corn flakes in year old milk. What a disaster! Meanwhile over here we got all these healthy, beautiful kids who aren't

spazzing out because they're dining on decent fuckin' cuisine, like those Fish Delights at McDonald's. Barron eats that stuff all day, and I give him a 6 pack of Mountain Dew to keep the mind workin right. Astonishing kid, you should really see those IQ scores. Through the fuckin' roof. Hikaru's bum parents could really learn a thing or two from your great and brave President. Still this is a definite must-read, makes you really happy you don't have one of these circus acts banging down the walls everytime theres a loud fuckin' noise.

Kayla Ndife says

This was, quite simply, a joy to read. Seeing the struggles and opportunities that Hikaru encounters in this volume shows just much he's grown and progressed over books one and two. I read this in one sitting and can't wait to get my hands on the next volume.

Andrea says

Sachiko is my hero. She doesn't have superpowers, she doesn't kick butt or have witty insults or defy the system. She doesn't spend a lot of time "finding herself" or search for love in all the wrong places or have a troubled childhood or fight crime. She is totally different from every other protagonist in that what makes her special is her goodness. When there's a problem, she really tries to understand the other person's point of view, but she doesn't back down, either. When a teacher is not helping her son at school, she doesn't just sit around and do nothing, nor does she gossip about the teacher or send her rude e-mails -- she thinks about it, comes up with a good idea, and then talks to the teacher politely and explains the situation and, even though things don't improve right away, she is patient with the teacher and persistent in helping to make the school a good place for her son to learn.

I think we need more heroes like that.

C says

These are great books as far as educational value. The personal stories at the end of each book give some wonderful insight into autistic people and their families, their struggles.

That said, the actual storyline in the book moves very slowly. I finished this one, and may pick up the others just to read the stories at the end of each book, but won't likely continue with the rest. I found myself wanting to skip ahead and see what happens - when that happens, I know I've lost interest.

Spider the Doof Warrior says

This book is so good. If you are the parent of an autistic child or just want to understand autism better, this is a good series to read. It does offer the message of, let's help and understand this child on his own terms and work with him. His friends understand him and try to help him. So do his parents. I do like how even bad guy characters are redeemed too.

Aiyana says

My main review of the series is here: Series Review.

Additional quotes and notes from this volume:

"Hikaru and Miyu-chan [nonverbal autistic children] have the need to express themselves./ ...I want to always accept the messages from our children." (episode 13)

From the endnotes "What is Autism?" section(warning: again, neurodiversity right folks will be frustrated at some of the language used here). *"Autistic people experience what they see, what they hear, what they touch, and what they taste differently from most people. It is not that they cannot see or hear. They can see objects and hear sounds, but what they focus on is a little different from the norm. Because of this, they do not like to play with friends, make conversation, or guess what others are thinking."* p 508.

While I am not entirely happy with this description of autism, I do like some of the phrasing (and it should be noted that the variety of autism described in this series is generally the nonverbal, sensory-avoidant type, which is more limited than the range of conditions described in America as "autism spectrum disorder"). This section also lists the 3 primary "problem" areas of autism to be 1) social skills, 2) communication, and 3) insistence (which I like better as a term than the American "restricted/repetitive behaviors"-- I think it better captures the need for structure and sameness that so many autistic people rely on, as well as their tendency to focus very intently on certain things). However, the story itself holds much more closely to the "intense world" theory of autism-- it is regularly shown that Hikaru's difficulties with communication and socialization result from his sensory differences and tendency to become overwhelmed by typical inputs.

The section concludes: *For autistic children, the world may be full of things they cannot comprehend. It is important for surrounding adults to understand the disability and make an effort to lessen their pain as much as possible so that they may live their lives comfortably.*" p 509. Again, I have mixed feelings about this statement. While it is true that autistic children (and some autistic adults) struggle with understanding certain things, stating it this way seems to imply a lack of intelligence on their part, which is often not the case. And I dislike the pitying implication that autistic children's lives are inherently painful... but I very much like the idea that their parents need to be aware of how much their children struggle and do what they can to mitigate those difficulties.

Again-- I enjoy this series very much on the whole. If I am overly critical of certain details, it is because I think these manga are worth careful critique.

Kirstie says

With the Light is the story of Sachiko Azuma and her son Hikaru, an autistic boy, and the trials and tribulations of their lives. (Mild Spoilers ahead)

Volume 3 starts with kaleidoscopes and the unknown dangers thereof and follows through as Gunji-sensei tries to be a better teacher to the special education class (in her own way) even though the crayfish project is

the last thing she wants to be involved in! Most exciting is Hikaru's participation in the school field trip, three nights and four days away from Sachiko!

As before, the depth of the characters and the fun of the story makes it all too easy to devour the 3 in 1 size volume in one go.

I recommend this series to lovers of manga, those who want to try manga and would like to start out with the best and anyone who is interested in a story involving an autistic child.

Nicholas Whyte says

Third in the series of graphic novels about a Japanese child with autism by the late Keiko Tobe. I found the first half of the book, where a new special education teacher repeatedly fails to rise to the occasion and deal with the needs of the children under her care, really quite tough reading; Sachiko Azuma, the viewpoint character whose child is at the centre of the story, displays much more patience than I could bear to in that situation. The second half of the volume has young Hikaru on a four-day school trip, which presents fairly huge challenges from a developmental psychological point of view. (Tobe throws in a couple of more standard soap-opera elements as well, as his schoolfriends engage in classroom politics and his father is demoted at work, but that's forgivable local colour.) Anyway, once again a fascinating and beautiful book.
