



## What Color is Monday? How Autism Changed One Family for the Better

*Carrie Cariello*

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One day last fall Jack asked me, “What color do you see for Monday?” as I heaved a chicken into the oven. “What?” I said distractedly, turning from the oven to slice some potatoes at the counter. It was late afternoon, and I was preparing dinner while also managing the demands of homework and tired toddlers. “Do you see days as colors?”

Raising five children would be challenge enough for most parents, but when one of them has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the adventures become even more fascinating. In this moving--and often funny--memoir, author Carrie Cariello invites us to take a peek into exactly what it takes to get through each day with four boys and one girl, and shows us the beauty and wonder of a child who views the world through a different lens.

## What Color is Monday? How Autism Changed One Family for the Better Details

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## **From Reader Review What Color is Monday? How Autism Changed One Family for the Better for online ebook**

### **Jennifer says**

This book by far has been my favorite read so far this year. It was literally like reading my life in print. I never dreamed I would be the parent of a child with Autism...but here I am. I have to believe my son was born to me for a reason....even if I don't fully understand the reason right now. If you'd like a good read that will pretty much give you insight into what it's like to have a child with Autism...I suggest this book. Well written and very insightful.

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### **Adelina says**

I think this is a must read for every parent. It doesn't matter if you have a child on the spectrum, Carrie's words will inspire you to be a better parent, and see past any flaws - because we all have them - to the child and person we all are.

After reading What Color is Monday? I made a resolve to stop yelling so much. I've never liked yelling, but my "red zone" seemed to get lower and lower every day. With Carrie's words behind me, I've been doing pretty good, and I see the difference it makes. My kids are your pretty average kids - messy, loud, and completely lovable - but even so, I was able to put into practice similar techniques Carrie used for Jack into my own parenting. I will be forever grateful that I picked up this book.

One specific piece of wisdom I will hold onto is something that had often weighed on my mind, about my own second child. The idea that she might fall on the spectrum had often been discussed between Mark and I. But I just didn't feel like she was completely, or that we should put that label on her. Then Carrie nailed it on the head - WE ARE ALL SOME SORT OF CRAZY! You know we are. Everyone has their problems, their difficulties. What makes someone on the spectrum is the combination of many problems. So I will continue to love and teach my brilliant daughter, while often reminding her that she can't climb on strangers laps and pointing to the man with the big white beard and yelling Santa Claus is not very appropriate. It's who she is, and I love her little self just brimming with love for everyone around her

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### **Adrienne says**

I love her writing style. This is a glimpse into life with an autistic child, and she does it with love and honesty and humor. Highly recommend!

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### **Michaela Abramo says**

This was an amazing book- I may be biased due to my ABA tech background and my summer work with children who reside on the spectrum and are working on their social skills but this was a truly heart warming story that I would highly recommend to anyone.

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### **Rebecca Lentz says**

If you read this book, you should also follow Carrie's blog and Facebook updates. She is funny, interesting, and keeps it real.

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### **Sheila says**

My (grown-up) nephew is autistic, so a book subtitled "How autism changed one family for the better" has to intrigue me, especially because the subtitle doesn't say "How one family changed their autistic child for the better." When a sibling asks if his brother will always be autistic, his mother, author Carrie Cariello, says yes. It's not an illness that goes away with treatment. It's not a paper diagnosis and plan of attack. It/He/Jack is a child, with personality and character all his own.

The biggest joy of Carrie Cariello's book is the character of her autistic son. Readily agreeing that not all autistic children are alike, she describes a boy with certain (sometimes uncertain) problems and curious (sometimes embarrassing) mannerisms. She includes humor as she tells of Jack's inappropriate outbursts, honesty as she points out her own mistakes and others', and above all patience and empathy. I see my nephew in many of Jack's characteristics, but not in all. I see my sister-in-law in many of the author's stories, but not in all. And I see a real child guided through a world that's unaccountably strange, striving to learn those things we "normals" take for granted while his siblings learn that he really isn't normal, but he's one of them—wise lessons in tolerance and in seeing what really matters.

Of course, none of us are completely normal. Author Carrie Cariello readily admits the presence of those "autistic tendencies" most of us would claim. When she describes her son's difficulty in a particular situation, another mother might say "My child is like that." But another child isn't like Jack, as that scary step between awkward and autistic becomes readily apparent. The writing moves forward and back through Jack's life—not a chronological progress, but a set of stepping stones in different directions—Jack in school; Jack making his First Communion; Jack in a restaurant; his fear of animals and his trip to the zoo... The effect feels much like sitting down to chat with another mother while a child watches over her shoulder—a beautiful, slightly different child, with oddly unpredictable reactions, prone to asking strange questions like "What color is Monday?" or to demanding you tell him if your mother's dead yet. I haven't really met Carrie Cariello, but I think I'd like her. I think I'd like meeting Jack as well. He'd remind me of my nephew and I'd feel a bit sad, because he'll never not be autistic, but I'd like him just the same for who he is, autism and all.

I'd recommend this book to anyone with family or friends dealing with autism, and to anyone who wonders how they'd react to a child rushing forward, pointing fingers and demanding to know what type of car they drive and what color it is. The world might be a gentler place if we could all respond with kindness and care.

Disclosure: I received a free copy of this book and was asked for my review as part of the author's promotional tour.

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## **Paige Bradish says**

I received What Color Is Monday? by Carrie Cariello from the publisher for my honest opinion.

Lately I have been reading many different kinds of books with autism in the story line, and I have to say its caught my interest quite a bit. I am not sure why but reading about kids or teens with Autism intrigues me I love to read about there challenges and how they overcome them. Which is What Color Is Monday? is all about we learn about the Cariello family and their struggle to deal with their young son Jack's autism.

Something that really inspires me is that the author Carrie Cariello, who is also a mother of 5 and a wife is able to share her families story with us. During the book while reading about all the struggles they have been through and how much time taking care of 5 kids takes up especially when one is autistic I was very surprised that she was able to put together a book. But I have to say I am glad she did because I loved reading about this families story.

I can't imagine going through what this family did and still being able to like go on a cruise or go out to dinner with the whole family as much as they did. My family which consists of my parents me, and my younger brother rarely go out to dinner but I wish we did because it seems to bring the Cariello family together quite a bit.

As I am writing this review, I am sitting here picking my brain trying to think of something that I did not like about the book. I can honestly say that there was not one thing that I did not like. I loved it from the first page to the last. Seeing everyone in the family grow from what they were before, seeing different but loving personalities and seeing one family stick together no matter what was all so inspiring.

Overall the book definitely gets a 5 out of 5 stars. There were times when I giggled at things little Henry said and there were times when I was sad because of the things Jack was going through. I hope everyone gets a chance to read this families story and just feel inspired by it, and love it as much as I did.

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## **Danielle says**

It took me forever to read this book not because I didn't like it or because it was hard, but simply because every time I read more than a page or two I would cry. I would cry because someone was putting into words the life I had led for the last 11 years. Things I can't explain to even those closest to me. Even though the situations were completely different each moment touched my heart. I so utterly and completely related to every fear every stage. I felt a true and unadulterated empathy for your experiences. I understand the overwhelming joys at what seem like such small accomplishments to other parents mean so very much to you! It gives me hope to know someone else has shared this journey or trials, school struggles, outbursts, and accomplishments. I shared in the understanding of how precious those moments are when they give you a glimpse inside of their world like when he told me that "all eyes look creepy to him like aliens. I really hate them, mom, they freak me out." I pictured in my head the alien's eyes from Men in Black and how disturbing some could be and for a moment. I understood what it must feel like to be my son. I understood that moment your child who is afraid of everything suddenly for no reason decides he wants to try something

daring like the Jurassic Park water ride at Universal Studios and how much that fills your heart with hope. Followed by the feeling that he still has a long way to go in overcoming his fear when the mere mention of trying a roller coaster sends him into a complete panic. I never have the words to explain to other people in my life what it is like to have moments when your child is so completely excited to do something and then something unexpected or unplanned for occurs sending him into a tailspin of meltdowns. How you begin to revolve your life around avoiding the triggers to his sensitivities and not because you're giving into him, but because you're giving him what he needs. He's like an alien in an unknown world trying every day to speak the language and fit in with the culture. He does every day all the time without a break the least we can do is do our best to remove those obstacles that completely stop him in his tracks. We recently took a trip to Disney thinking we had prepared our son for everything he would encounter. He was excited and ready wanting to experience everything. Then our first steps into the park there was a loud noisy light filled parade just feet from where we stood. Crowds rush to see the parade the noise got louder as it approached. My heart slowed as I saw my husband gasp we both turn to look at our son with his hands over his ears! The tears and frustration in his eyes he didn't want out of there he needed out of there. It's so impossible to explain that moment to other parents who haven't experienced that heart-wrenching experience. It's so difficult to explain despite all those moments just like that one you would not change him for the world. You would change the fact that he always knows the exact numbers of days it is till his birthday or how he knows every snake that ever existed name. How much you cherish all the knowledge about animals he's given you and how his passion for animals is inspirational. The strength of my son's dreams gives me the strength to make them a reality to do whatever necessary to make them come true. I agree with you wholeheartedly that it takes belief and a lot of yoga to get through the hard days, but I wouldn't miss the smiles his funny without knowing its self for all the gold in fort Knox. I am incredibly touched by the way your book expresses the special bonds that exist between siblings of kids with autism. They are what you wish ever person you meet could be understanding, accepting, respecting, and most importantly they don't view them as any different from anyone else they meet. They struggling with their sibling's differences just as parents do, but they also reveal in them just as we do. This book reminded me that we all some quirky and autistic traits. That I shouldn't get offended when other people say their kids have similar issues because they are just trying to relate. We all have some quirky features that we grow out of or learn to cope with the difference with Autism is that their brains lack the ability to develop those coping skills the way others do naturally. This book showed me that and reminded me to see this as an endearing way of trying to understand instead of arguing that they don't understand. I just wanted to say a big thank you to this author from one Autistic mommy to another. Thank you for bringing me comfort and promoting understanding. It's not easy to put yourself out there and certainly not easy to capture what it's like to parent an autistic child and have multiple children! I apologize for the long post, but some things require a long post to express.

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### **Arlene says**

Having read some of Ms Cariello's posts on Autism Speaks, I knew I wanted to read her book about her son, Jack, who is on the Autistic Spectrum. What Color is Monday deals plainly with what it is like to live each day with a child who has difficulty relating to his own body and the world around him. But this mom also has come to grips with the fact that Autism is not going away and she has learned that instead of trying to fix Jack, she must fix herself as she deals with her son. Jack is a fortunate boy to be a member of a loving family which includes four siblings who have been instrumental in helping Jack grow and adapt. As the nana of a precious boy on the spectrum, this book made me laugh and it made me cry as I understand the puzzle that is autism. This book gives HOPE to those who have heard the words, "Your child is autistic".

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### **Aimee Adams says**

"Autism is something to embrace, not to conquer." This was a tender read on a family's journey with Autism. I really enjoyed this book and would recommend. I found it was an engaging honest window into their family life but touched on so many complex parts of Autism...theory of mind, anxiety, rigidity of thought, joint attention, regulation and sensory issues.

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### **Nancy says**

Five children. One on the Autism Spectrum. How do you cope? You begin by reading this book, that's how! Not putting aside the stress, reorganization of your family's life but this book really will help you. If you do not have a child with autism but know someone who does, it will help you to help them as well.

When Carrie became pregnant with her second child, she had no idea how her life would change. When Jack didn't act like his big brother she became concerned and, at age three they were told what they had already figured out: Jack had Pervasive Developmental Disorder. And by now, they had three boys.

This book has some excellent ideas of coping with your child and with yourself as well. Children are much more flexible than you would imagine and some of the stories told in *What Color is Monday?* will make you laugh out loud. Others will make you cry. All will teach you something and that something will help you understand.

I have reviewed 3 books on autism in the past year: *Me, Who Dove Into the Heart of the World* by Karen Neito, *Finding Kansas* by Aaron Likens and this one. All are concerned with different aspects of autism. All have different lessons to learn and all should be read.

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### **Leeann says**

I absolutely LOVE Carrie Cariello's essays that she writes on Mondays on her blog. I have shared her writings more often than pretty much anything else I read and they touch me deeply. While her book was good, a solid 3.5, the essays just don't translate as well into book form. It jumped around a bit too much for me, they were sometimes redundant in repeating information that I had read only a few chapters before and so on.

I strongly encourage you to check out her blog if you have not seen it. You will develop a love for Jack and his family and a strong admiration for this amazing woman/mother and her husband.

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### **Chrissy (The Every Free Chance Reader) says**

Did Melissa enjoy this book: I did! I laughed out loud once or twice (and teared up a few times, too). Cariello tells her story with confidence and class.

I found the first part of the book a bit tedious (mostly because I felt like I was getting briefed on a new case – I'm a behavior analyst and I've worked with people on the spectrum for years), but for people new to ASD, Cariello's book is a great way to get a glimpse of life with autism. She describes the endless doctor visits and

therapy sessions with strength and humor, and although her writing sometimes feels a bit over-stylized, it's hard not to fall in love with the entire Cariello family.

Several things will stick with me – Joe's whispered counting during fireworks, Jack's drawing of "Toilet" and "Underwear," the disastrous family swim lessons, and Cariello's poignant letters to her children each year on their birthdays. I'm impressed with her cognizance of the quiet, happy moments many of us rush right over, and I had to stop reading several times to go attack my ten month old with snuggles.

Blame it on my career choice if you like, but I cringed a bit each time Cariello tried to explain Jack's behavior to strangers by labeling it as autism. After more than ten years in the field, I've come to understand that people who stare are going to stare whether you shout "autism" or not, and the people for whom it would make a difference don't really care about labels.

I've certainly had my share of cringe-worthy moments (highlights include chasing a buck-naked six year old as he sprinted down the street and helping a mother carry her preschooler away from a museum train exhibit as he shouted, "Help! No! Help! Help Me!" at the top of his tiny voice). Now that I'm a mother, I'm beginning to understand that it's a bit more personal when it's not just your client but your son making the scene, but I guess I wished that the Carrie who yelled at a blind man's service dog would have made an appearance more often.

Would Melissa recommend it: Sure. Even if you're not interested in learning about autism, this is a great little book about a mother's love for her family. It's a quick read, but a good one.

Will Melissa read it again: Probably not.

(She received a copy of this book for review purposes.)  
<http://everyfreechance.com/2013/04/re...>

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### **Bookaddict says**

What Color is Monday? is a heart warming account of a New Hampshire family and their life with a son who is autistic. As I read, I think I experienced just about every emotion one can experience. I laughed, I cried...my feelings vacillated from slight jealousy (they have the big family I always wanted), to chuckling at the trials and tribulations of having such a big family (having been the youngest of five kids myself), to the gut wrenching solidarity of having a child on the autism spectrum who struggles with fears, anxieties, sensory defensiveness, and sensory seeking behaviors. I could really relate to Cariello's story in so many ways and admire what a loving and involved mother, supportive wife, and champion for children with autism she is.

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### **Donna says**

No book has captured our reality more than this one. Jack is her gift as Logan has been ours.

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