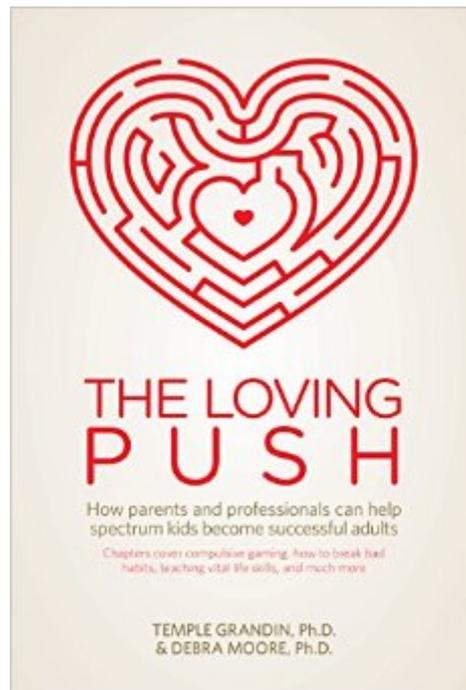


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# The Loving Push: How Parents And Professionals Can Help Spectrum Kids Become Successful Adults



## Synopsis

Parents, teachers, therapists, and anyone who cares about a child or teen on the autism spectrum needs this essential roadmap to prepare our youth for being successful adults in today's world. Best-selling author, autism advocate, and animal science professor Dr. Temple Grandin joins psychologist and autism specialist Dr. Debra Moore in spelling out the steps you can take to restore your child's hope and motivation, and what you must avoid. Eight life stories told by people on the autism spectrum, including chapters on subjects such as how to get kids off their computers, how to build on their strengths and get back to caring about their lives, and how to find a path to a successful, meaningful life make this a **MUST-READ BOOK**.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Loving Push" is a collaboration between Debra Moore and Temple Grandin that provides some advice for teaching teens and youth with Autism. Because Autism is one of my son's diagnosis, and I found one of Ms. Grandin's other books very enlightening, I purchased this. For me, after previewing the "look inside" function, there was a question in my mind about how much of this book could be applicable to my son's situation, as it seems by and large to be geared towards those with Asperger's, which is a higher functioning form of Autism than my son has. Because he also has Sotos Syndrome, and a duplication in his 5th chromosome, our situation doesn't really fit neatly into anybody's camp, so often I feel like when I read things, I have to pick out the parts that I feel can be useful in application to my son's therapy regime regardless, so I decided to take a chance on this one anyways. So this review is aimed at any parent who has a child who would be considered

lower functioning. Without a doubt, I agree with the general premise of this book, and I think it can be generalized to kiddos with lower functioning Autism. When my son's sensory problems first emerged, they were so severe, his Occupational Therapist at the time expressed doubt that he would ever be able to tolerate the school environment. My little man, for example, puked when things touched his skin he didn't like, puked when people got too close to him, puked if he didn't like the smells...there was a time when I couldn't go anywhere in public without getting puked on, peed on, or pooped on. He's been in therapy for 2.5 years now, and I've worked tirelessly with him, gently pushing him forward by pushing him just to the threshold of a reaction on something and then pulling back, and gradually moving that line forward once his tolerance improved. Kind of basically like the parable of boiling a frog. Push them into the hot water, they will freak out and jump out. Slowly crank up the heat, and they adjust. Not that my son is a frog, or that I'm boiling him, but he was able to enter into a developmental preschool program this past year and hasn't puked on anybody so much as once. Now that doesn't mean he's cooperating with them, or that all of his other sensory challenges aren't needing to be worked with, because all of those things are. But I know that if we hadn't been gently pushing him forward, my son wouldn't have made the progress he has. I think also that in general, as a parent of a child with significant disability, speaking to parents who also may have a child with significant disability, I would also add that you shouldn't be afraid to provide some gentle encouragement to the therapy members involved. Everybody has boxes they want to put my son in, I have noticed. Many people we work with have come to conclusions about the limitations they think my son will have. And some of them may end up being right, but what I know for sure is that the moment you stop trying, you've set your own limit and that's all you're going to get. So we're shooting for all of the skills we can, and we'll be grateful for whatever we can help him to acquire, because some day he will have to navigate this world without our help. And nobody, including me at my most optimistic, thinks that he will be able to be fully independent. But if all of this gentle pushing gets him to the assisted living level as opposed to the total care level, it will have been worth it. And literally, I walk around like a 24/7 therapy session with this kiddo. I used to have hobbies, right? Which brings me to the final point from this book I think can be generalized to a kiddo who is lower functioning. As parents and caregivers, you must take care of yourselves. I don't know anybody personally with a child whose struggles are as profound as mine... I know they are out there, but I don't know nor am I in contact with a single one. That can be very isolating, on top of the stresses of managing the difficulties that have come from each of his medical conditions. Many of my hobbies I may have had to give up, but taking time for myself somewhere whenever possible helps keep my head recharged and in this game. Most days that

looks like my workout time, or a long walk with him in the stroller. But what they say in there is correct, if you want to help someone, you have to first make sure you're standing in a safe place yourself. In general, many parents with a kiddo with significant challenges may read the specific examples in this book and think "I only wish those were the problems I was dealing with." That is not to minimize the difficulties that these families detailed in the book have gone through, but it is a very different level of functioning and challenges, and that may make this book feel less applicable to families with lower functioning kiddos, if for example, you're dealing with hours a day of a child with self-injurious behavior, or who is non-verbal, or who has significant motor challenges, or who once you got them over their sensory issues for squishy stuff thinks painting with their poopy diapers is awesome and had become obsessed with it for a period of time. But I still think the main take away points are pertinent and useful, and while not always easy to apply, can be generalized to children with different struggles.

This book is fantastic and a must read for all parents and teachers of autistic children. The strategies in this book work with children, teens, and adults. I am very impressed with the explanations and real life examples used. I have Aspergers Syndrome and found this book accurately explains my experience and how my mind works in a way that non-autistic individuals can understand. As a parent of a child on the spectrum, I find this book is very useful in helping to develop effective strategies to prevent her meltdowns and put an end to her reclusive and detrimental habits.

Most parents grapple with how to guide their children into a valuable and viable adulthood. Through all of my years of parenting and my time of consoling and counseling many parents in churches where I have pastored, this is a steady stream of stress. But add to this the particular struggles of autism, and the frustrations and feelings of futility can be greatly exacerbated. To restore hope and rebuild courage in parents with children on the spectrum comes a new 288 page paperback. *The Loving Push: How parents and professionals can help spectrum kids become successful adults* has co-written by Dr. Temple Grandin, author, professor and lecturer who is on the spectrum; and Dr. Debra Moore, author and psychologist who has worked with many clients dealing with HFA and Asperger™s. As the authors state, they "want to increase the odds that your child grows into an adult with a rewarding, meaningful life" (xiii). *The Loving Push* weaves together the stories of several young people who are on the autism spectrum and their parents. The accounts describe real live people overcoming and

working through their specific peculiarities to become increasingly capable of independent living. Setbacks, disappointments and dark moments are described, as well as successes and advancements. Their parents and mentors also chime in voicing their strategies, relating the consequences and end results. The one shared trait in every story is that each person "was encouraged and "stretched" just outside of their comfort zone by at least one adult in their life, which helped keep them from falling into "chronic learned helplessness" (26). Beyond the stories, the authors tackle several "how-to" approaches. For example, Chapter 2 walks the reader/mentor through ways to enable their unique child to avoid learned helplessness, to learn optimism and resist habitual negative thinking, while encouraging the mentor in the importance of their role. The significance of supportive adults is drummed through the book from cover-to-cover, especially adults who blend "being a positive role model, a source of advice or information, and someone who "expects "effort and accountability" (33). Grandin and Moore also address ways to help end a child's bad habits, stretch them out of their comfort zones, and assist them to break out of chronic anxiety and a "don't care" attitude. One of the critical chapters in "The Loving Push" addresses the danger of compulsive electronic gaming and how it can turn kids on the spectrum into "media recluses". The authors make a careful distinction between recreational and compulsive gaming. They work the reader through the ways gaming affects children's brains, how game developers deliberately fashion games to get compulsive or addictive responses, why ASD kids are more vulnerable to these ploys, and what to do to help the children from being consumed. One of the key components to remediating compulsive gaming is developing authentic associations. As the authors note, relationships "with real people in real time can be the best replacement for compulsive gaming" (145). "The Loving Push" is a simple read for parents and adults who are engaged with children, teens and young adults that are somewhere on the spectrum. But even parents with neurotypical children will find this volume fruitful. As a result of reading the chapter on compulsive gaming, my wife and I have initiated some important changes with our remaining children in our home. This is a book I highly recommend! My thanks to Future Horizons and Dr. Debra Moore for the free copy of "The Loving Push" used for this review sent at my request. The assessments are mine given without restrictions or requirements (as per Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255).

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