

Why Are My Kids Weird?

a 2011 talk by Graham Mitchell
comprising 53 slides

Mr. Mitchell's (Hard-Learned) Tips for
Not Being Creepy

Don't Be Creepy

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talks

I've been teaching high school computer science since the fall of 1997, and it one day occurred to me that I should try to teach some social skills to my students. Thus, in September of 2005, the "Don't Be Creepy" lecture was born. Since that first fateful presentation, I've given versions of it at schools and universities and for crowds large and small.

If you'd like to have me speak at your location, just [contact me](#).

If you're just stumbling across this site from a link someone gave you, then you probably want [this slide deck](#). Otherwise, information and slides from past and future talks are below.

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

Why Won't My Weird Kids Listen?

You've already been to *Why Are My Kids Weird* and you understand your weird students, but for some reason what you're trying with them isn't working very well. Why does that kid do so well in other teachers' classes but not yours? This follow-up session will focus less on theory and more on practice, with battle-tested tips from a teacher who has taught mostly weird kids for over a decade!

- event: Leander ISD Continuous Improvement Conference
- location: Vista Ridge High School (Cedar Park, TX), room B329 (Wrestling)
- time: 2:15pm
- script coming soon
- slides coming soon

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

1. Why are they “weird”?

1. Why are they “weird”?

2. How should I handle them?

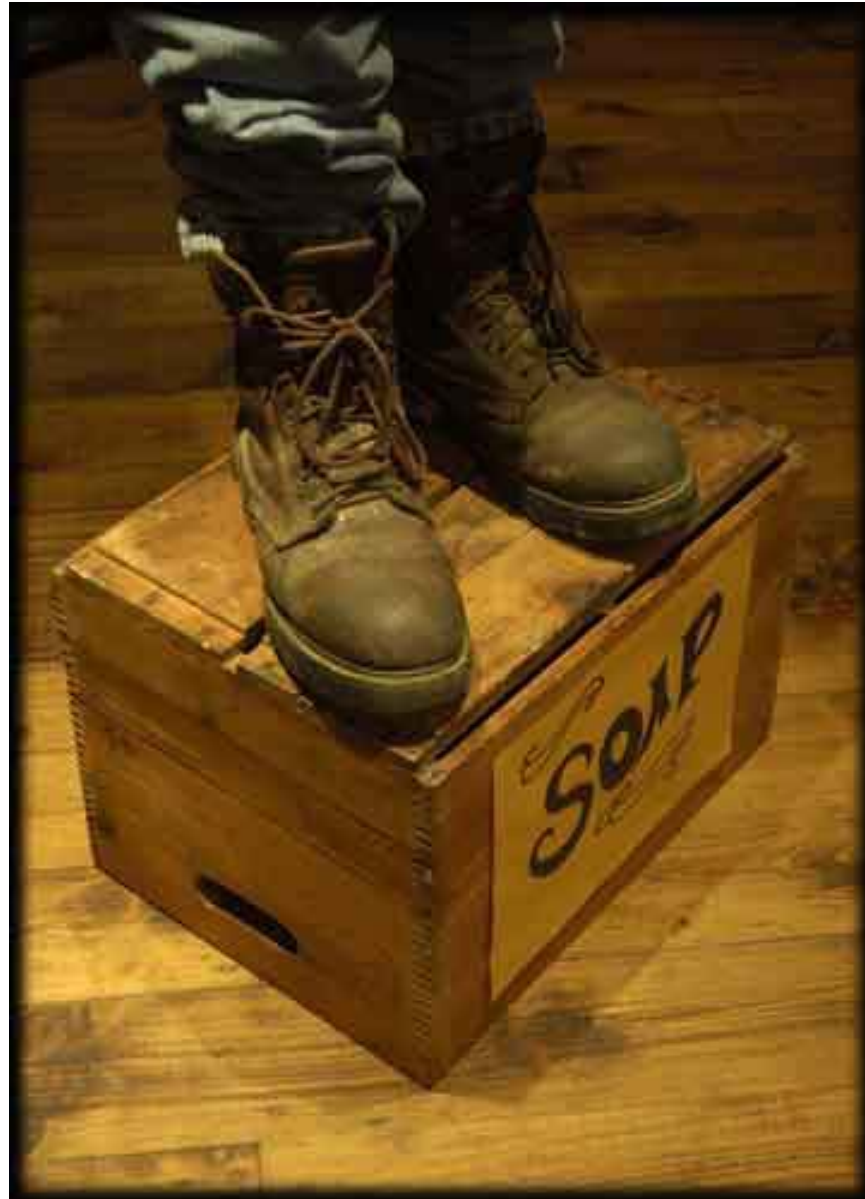
1. Why are they “weird”?

2. How should I handle them?

3. How can I help them?

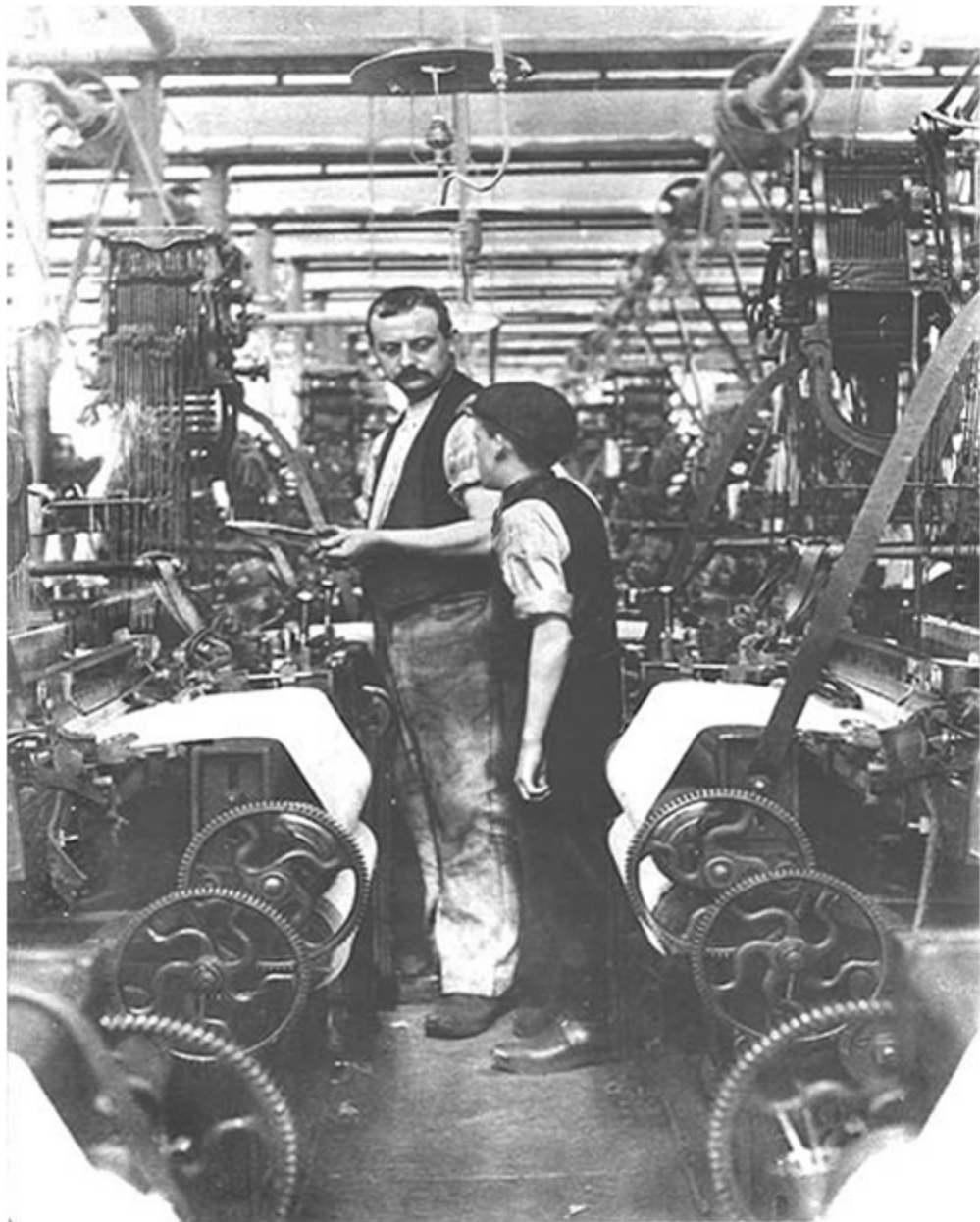


- 1. Occasionally brilliant.**
- 2. Socially awkward.**









FACTORY WORKERS

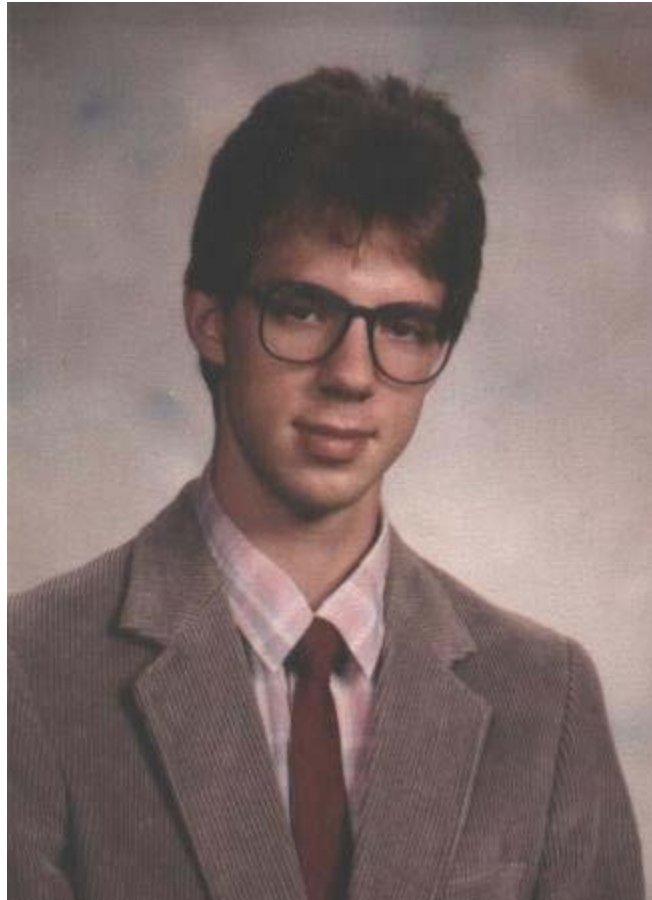
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Graham Mitchell







“[Our economy] demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption. The measure of social status, of social acceptance, of prestige, is now to be found in our consumptive patterns [...] We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing pace. We need to have people eat, drink, dress, ride, live, with ever more complicated and, therefore, constantly more expensive consumption.”

**-- retail analyst Victor Lebow,
in his paper *Price Competition in 1955***

Social norms are sometimes:

- **arbitrary**
- **temporary**
- **subtle**
- **non-verbal**



Popularity is a stupid, shallow game.

But they can't choose not to play.



~1996



2008



Would you trust this man?

image manipulation by Justin Oliver, LHS class of 1999



Autism

- **marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction**



Autism

- lack of social or emotional reciprocity
- impaired ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others
- interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus

Asperger syndrome

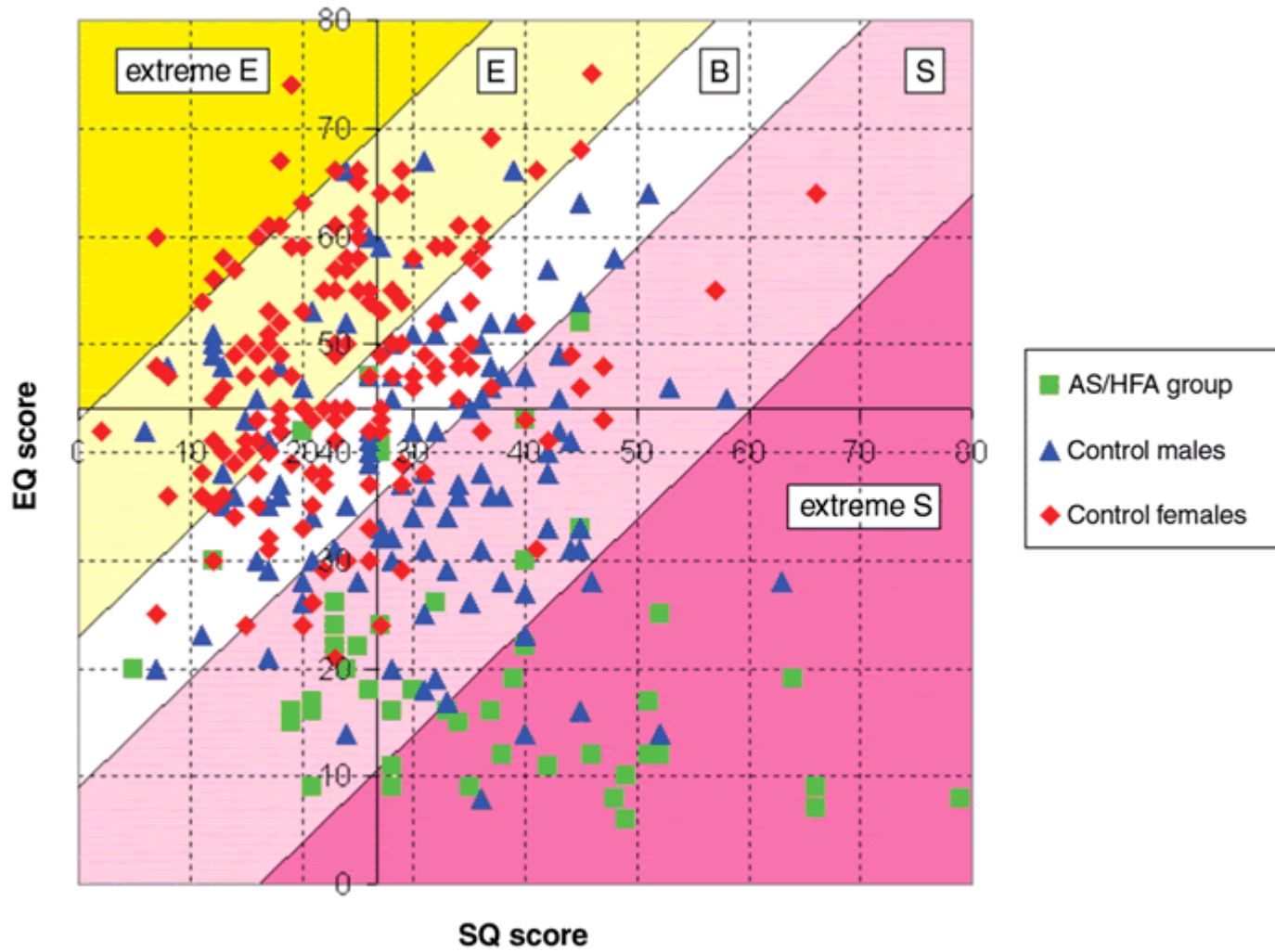


- preoccupation with a subject to the exclusion of other activities
- socially and emotionally inappropriate behavior and interpersonal interaction
- problems with nonverbal communication
- clumsy and uncoordinated motor movements



Simon Baron-Cohen

**the “EQ SQ” theory
of Autism**





empathy

or

systemizing



7% - words used





7% - words used

38% - tone of voice





7% - words used

38% - tone of voice

55% - nonverbal





**“Do you
understand
what I’m saying?”**



mirror neuron system





Can you spot 6 differences?



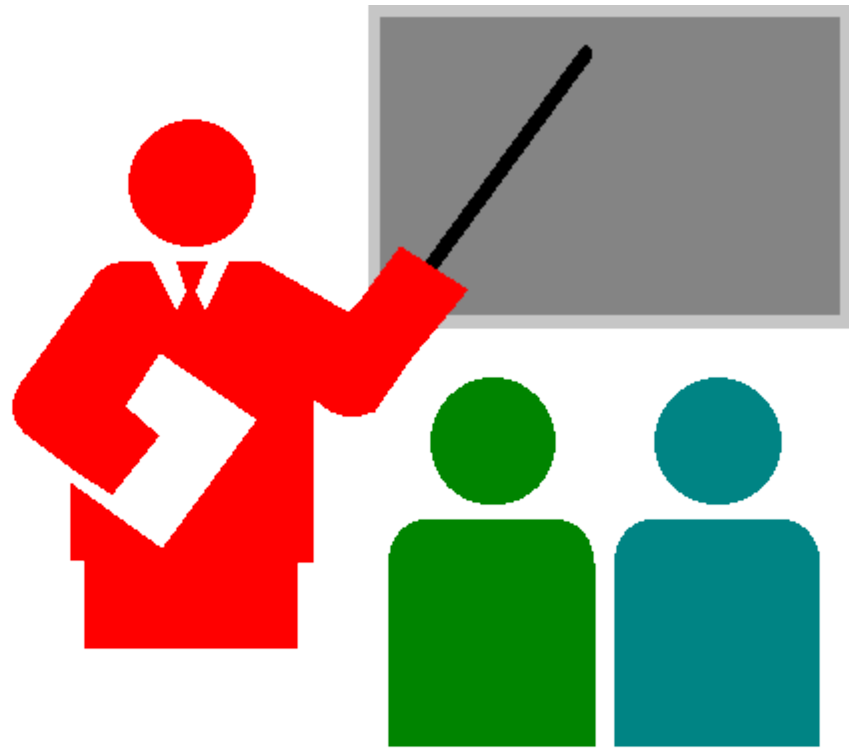
2.

**How should I
deal
with them?**

Use empathy.



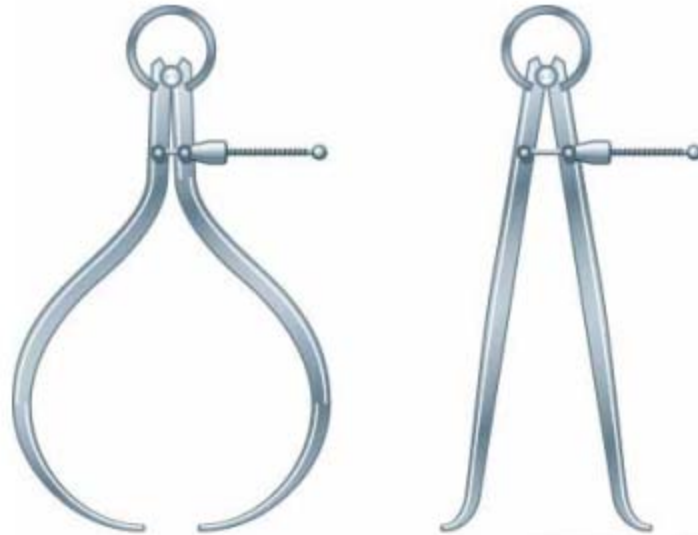
**Use words.
Explain.**



Be direct.



Be precise.



3.

**How can I
help
them?**

Be apologetic.



Introversion is okay.



Explain social rules.



Teach tact.



Praise effort.





Lower the bar.



**“The perfect
is the enemy
of the good.”**

- Voltaire

**don't
be
creepy**

The End

...any questions?

Don't Be Creepy

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