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My Struggle To Find Meaningful Employment And Financial Independence.

INTRODUCTION: In spite of my intelligence and pursuit of higher education, I have been unable to obtain high end employment that utilizes my skills. There are issues I dealt with when pursuing a career in Photojournalism, Commercial Photography, Web Design, and retail. When my schooling and profession failed me, I fell back on Retail, but found my advancement to be limited. I will share with you candidly some of my experiences in the workplace as an undiagnosed person and how this struggle continues to this day, and make some recommendations.

AIM: Agencies that help people on the spectrum find jobs seem to be so focused only on retail, on finding a job, not a career. Autistic individuals however often have greater skills and much more to offer. Traditional hiring processes are also often designed for neurotypical people. For example, interviews that rely heavily on social skills can be difficult for neurodivergent individuals, who may not be comfortable with small talk or eye contact. People need to be taught that people can be wired differently, and people on the spectrum need to have opportunities to use their talents, and be able to live independently when they get older.

TAKEAWAYS: Tailored Recruitment: Adjusting hiring processes to be more accessible and accommodating, such as offering alternative interview formats. Full disclosure to the employer. Educate the employer the benefits of hiring an autistic person. Neurodivergent individuals often possess extraordinary talents, including exceptional memory, pattern recognition, and analytical skills, which can lead to groundbreaking innovations and solutions.

RECOMENDATIONS: Agencies should apply the same techniques as are used for neurotypical people, not treat them like they are inferior, but modified for their special needs and quirks. Employers need to be educated about the advantages that different ways of thinking can bring to their bottom line.

Biography

Robert grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. He has a green thumb, is a handyman, caregiver, chef, science fiction writer, photographer, researcher, self-advocate, journalist, web designer, and artist, an all around Renaissance man.

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