

I Have A Brother With Autism

as told by Susan D. age 8

I have a brother with autism. His name is Brandon.

Brandon looks like any other child, but on the inside his brain is working differently than others.

Like I said, Brandon has autism. His autism makes it harder for him to learn. He can learn, but it's harder. Another thing that is hard is to be a sibling of someone with autism. It's hard to live with because sometimes he makes all of these noises when I have friends over. Sometimes I wonder if he's trying to say something like, "Hey, I want to play too!" Sometimes I wish he could just tell me. His jibber jabber can get annoying.

Another thing that makes it hard to live with is the special treatment he gets from my parents. Sometimes it seems like they care about him more than they care about me. That makes me feel jealous of him. Sometimes I wish I had autism too, because then I could get the special treatment. Also, having autism might help me to communicate with him.

Sometimes I wonder if children who have the same disability like autism can talk in the same way, like talking in the same language or sometimes I wonder if they make up their own languages to try to make us to understand.

Sometimes I wonder what he is thinking. Sometimes I wish I could just unzip his brain and see what it is he is thinking.... But sadly enough, I can't.

Sometimes people come across him that don't understand him. They ask him questions that I know he can't answer like, "Hey Brandon, when is your birthday?" Sometimes I wonder if he knows when it is. Usually he needs prompting to answer those kinds of questions. Prompting means a little help. It hurts my feelings and I know it hurts my brother too. I'm not sure, but I don't think anyone would like to be misunderstood. Sometimes I worry that someone will come across him that doesn't understand and might tease him and it sort of scares me. I don't know if I can stand up for my brother.

I wish I could tell them to back off, but I worry that I won't be able to. Sometimes it's hard to be the one that always has to watch him. Sometimes I just wish I could get the monkey off my back.

Sometimes I wish Brandon were just a normal kid. Just a normal first grader. Sometimes I wonder if he really has friends. Like, not really just a friend but a best friend, like I have.

If Brandon didn't have autism, I wouldn't have to worry about him so much. Like on his first day at his new school, I worried my head off all day long. Sometimes, it's hard for me to enjoy things when I'm thinking about him doing something else. Sometimes, I wish he could make more out of things. Like on his birthday, he gets all these presents and it's in the middle of summer and he can have a pool party, but he never gets anything out of it. We invite all the friends of my parents, but not his friends. I get more out of his party than even he does. I wish I had a summer birthday so I could have a pool party. My birthday is in March and sometimes there is snow on the ground, but not enough to play

in – all it does is make the ground all slushy so we can't go outside. Sometimes I'm jealous of Ben having a summer birthday, when he doesn't get anything out of it.

Sometimes I wish I could have autism just for one day, then maybe I could try asking him in his language, "Hey, bro, what do you think all day?" and maybe he would tell me and I'd understand. It seems like his brain is a room – a room that contains all the secrets we need to cure autism, but the room is locked and the key has been thrown away.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to someone who had autism as a child and was cured by time and hard work. Sometimes I wonder what it feels like to have autism.

Sometimes I want to know what he is feeling. Sometimes I wonder if his jibber

jabber is his way of speaking to us. Maybe he thinks we can understand. I guess I won't know until he is cured and he can talk to us in our language. But until then, I hope scientists keep looking for a cure – for a cure for autism. Until then, I guess I'm just going to have to learn how to live with autism.