

International Forum 'Volunteer of Russia' 2015



Health limitations : challenges and solutions

Eric LUCAS presentation

[Hello Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Eric LUCAS, I am from France,] (in Russian)

здравствуйте дамы и господа, я эрик люка, я из франсий,

(Zdravstvuyte Damy i Gospoda, ya Erik Luka, ya iz Frantsiy,)

and now you know almost half of my Russian vocabulary ...

... I will continue in French, thanks to the translation kindly made by Anna.

I am an autistic (with a so-called "high functioning level").

Today I want to show that it is possible to greatly reduce disability in communication and socialization, to adapt oneself, to live the life we want, to refuse the one that others impose on us.

When I was a young schoolboy, others made fun of me; later in holiday camps they amused themselves by throwing stones at me (which were painful); then in high school it was snowballs sometimes with stones in it; and 20 years I was so shy that I was afraid of saleswomen in shops ...

Today, I use to speak at the United Nations, the UNESCO, the World Health Organization; I am appreciated there... and I am even consulted by the government of my country, for autism.

How can this little miracle be possible? ...

First, through technical adaptations based on ingenuity, the constant search for improvements and solutions, and the decision to follow my way without consideration for criticisms about my "abnormality".

At 21, I left the system and I began to work as a disc jockey in clubs, against the advice of my relatives.

It allowed me :

- To communicate with people directly, through the emotion of the music, without misunderstandings and other problems of language;
- To feel myself useful, and to make a living;
- To understand the different "categories of people," learning to appreciate their different musical tastes;
- To learn to be realistic and adapted because any musical choice too much theoretical and inappropriate resulted in an immediate drop in the atmosphere, and then by customers who leaving.
- And then I was surprised to realize that I was appreciated by others (something that I did not know and that, thus, I was not expecting), and even surprised to find that rather enjoyable.

In order not to be bothered by the clients, I developed tricks, communicating by post-its, having all kinds of barriers, such as secrets electrical systems to enter my booth.

When my protections were not sufficient and that staff or customers still managed to irritate me, I then tried to apologize and fix things at best, sincerely, which was appreciated.

Examples of material accommodations include:

- Special anti-noise headset, which I use an unusual way, totally effective in protecting my train of thought, very sensitive;
- No ringer on the phone;
- No TV (it is me who choose when I want to know about the outside world);
- And a special clothing, which contains everything I need (since I can hardly rely on others).

My mental accommodations at first, when I was younger: some examples.

Listen my intuition telling me:

- To have confidence in me;
- To allow myself the right to make mistakes (and to repair), which allows to experiment and improve;
- To judge me over my free will and my common sense;
- Do not hesitate to experiment with all sorts of things;
- Do not let me discouraged by the judgments and criticisms of people who do not know me and do not understand me;
- Do not be afraid of ridicule;
- Never give up.

My progress towards the real normal world, in full.

When I was a DJ at night I was adapted, but it was with a society itself to escape normality, so it was a minimum common ground.

But in the daytime, things were not going well at all: I had a lot of problems with people, a lot of aggressions, so much that I ended up hating society, and to ask for help to a psychiatric hospital: I was naive and logical and I thought that they could help me and that they would understand me, but they understood something else than what I told them, and they rejected me.

But I was so desperate that I had no other way out (society had become unbearable and I did not know what to do), therefore I insisted, and I got a little upset, which displeased them, then they forced me into medical detention against my will, for more than a year, and never considered my explanations, and this until I finally understood that I had to pretend to agree with them.

This long wasted period of my life at least allowed me to fully understand the stupidity and bad will of these people, and of public services in general.

They have not even been able to give me a diagnosis, nor even to see that I was autistic.

After that, I was very disgusted and incredulous because if even professional experts do not understand me, so ... either people do not understand me because I am sick and crazy, or because they do not have the knowledge or sufficient capabilities.

So, intuitively, I checked that I was sensible and that it was the others who (usually) lived in absurdity; I took the plunge:

I made parodies of surveys on the street, wacky hidden camera investigations, and other personal initiatives, which allowed me to:

- To discover how hypocrites people were;
- To see that they were afraid of me (while I am harmless and I was afraid of them, at first);
- To learn to talk to strangers easily, which is very difficult for an autistic (when you are not protected by a Disc Jockey situation).

Finally, I realized that this society, which impressed me so much, is a paper tiger ... and this is a fundamental lesson that I would love to make other autistics understand.

Then I continued the experiences and adventures, through a progression of difficulties: I worked in some rather "special" services, I'm in the Guinness Book of Records, I went to TV shows (which were very stressful for me), but it would take too long to explain and I do not want that old TV footages, personal, be mixed with what I am doing now in altruism.

Finally, with the self-confidence that I got, I managed to look "normal" (externally), to learn friendship with ease; I ventured to distant countries, where in 2013 I saw a film unknown in France ("My name is Khan"), which made me realize that I was autistic (thanks to the faculty of making links provided by my autism), and this was the revelation of my life, the light which explained all my difficulties.

As soon as I got the official confirmation of my autism, I wanted to help others by sharing my experience and examples of solutions, so I created the association Alliance Autiste, in France.

It is very difficult to cooperate with autism, but again I searched and found solutions, for example by setting up remote communication and offline, leaving aside the egos to be interested only in goals, by refusing to participate in "small wars" between parents associations, trying to be impartial, etc.

Defending autistics in a French society dominated by psychiatry, and where the only thing proposed to us is the hospital, is very very difficult because there are important economic interests which do not want to be bothered.

Rather than getting into a losing battle, and knowing too well the bad faith of French institutions, I started by going directly to the UN.

Since then, thanks to all the things done by our association with the UN, we have an important weight in France and we are often invited by the government, which is now beginning to accept to take appropriate measures.

We never give up and we push the system into its contradictions and failures. Our main tools are: sincerity, logical consistency, realism, organization, precision and perseverance, and on all these points we are certainly stronger than the bureaucrats.

Some lessons learned, and advices.

- Do not be daunted by the "normalitarisme" (that's a word I invented).

- Do not give in to the dictatorship of "confortabilisme" (this is also a word that I invented).
- Find what is good in your own difference, and use it to make the difference, the "something extra" compared to others, to use as a strength.
- To dare, experiment, knocking on every door.

You can't make pancakes without breaking eggs.

In case of error, or if one is ridiculous, the world won't collapse: I have made many mistakes, I still do, but I'm still here, and I'm getting better. If I do not try, I do not progress.

- Believe in yourself and do not be a slave of the judgment (real or perceived) of people who do not even know you;
- Refuse to follow the conformisms, the automatisms, the passive majority which, in order to justify his laziness and cowardice, says "it is too difficult to solve problems," and therefore does nothing, and because of which the problems are getting worse, then.
- Look only at the positive side of people; and then it is that they will use with you.
- Finally: be yourself, be free, live without accepting the unacceptable, but also do not live only for your own little person.

By having confidence in me deeply (but recognizing my mistakes), with a lot of will, and refusing to give in to discouragement and negative people, I learned to overcome my social communication problems, my fear of the other, so much that I am now able to speak to the UN, to meet anyone in the world, and even to help people understand together.

For someone who, before, was mocked and rejected, who was afraid of people, this perfect social adaptability, the ability to be effective and appreciated, is the best reward for so many efforts, and it is the proof that works.

Now I want to embrace the Life, the World, in direct, everywhere, and -above all- to share my luck.

In conclusion.

I think that in a society where most problems are due to selfishness, rejection of the other, fear of the unknown and to confinement in comfortable small "boxes", solutions to social problems can hardly come from state systems and impersonal governments, who are machinal and without feelings.

I think, on the contrary, that it is the volunteerism organizations based on the goodwill of realistic, sincere, altruistic, innovative, determined and courageous individual, which may, by their concrete actions and common sense, offer the world chances not to sink into chaos.

I think that nothing good and constructive is possible without pragmatic good sense, altruistic good faith, goodwill and compassion, and that's why Vectors of Friendship seems good and right.

Russia and France are now standing together, facing the very serious danger of terrorism; I think that it would be good to quickly organize the connection and cooperation of all volunteer organizations, at least in Europe, and especially the youth, to whom the world of tomorrow belongs, and who therefore have the right to refuse be hostage to the stupidity and cowardice of some officials, to be hostages of unsuitable and outdated political systems.

Indeed, if we, a small autistics' association, have managed in less than one year to be heard and respected by a yet rigid and reluctant government, then it means that everything is possible, and that young people of all countries must be able to sit in front of the leaders and to hold them accountable, to discuss seriously, and to demand -without ever weakening- to start putting the world back to the right way up.

Like the autistics, the young people are not formatted: they can change the world, and I hope it will be possible to say of them, as Mark Twain said: "They did not know it was impossible, so they did it".

Given all this, I want to thank the organization Vectors of Friendship, whose intuition and goodwill are flagrant, hoping that such initiatives can multiply and be encouraged, to safeguard humanity and life.

Now is the time to deliver the other half of my Russian vocabulary:

[\[Thank you for your attention, and for defending common sense, justice, peace, Life. Thank you.\] \(In Russian\)](#)

спасибо большое за внимание, сохранение
чувств справедливости, мира во всем мире и
жизни. благодарю вас.

(Spasibo bol'shoye za vnimaniye, sokhraneniye chuvstva spravedlivosti, mira vo vsem mire i zhizni. Blagodaryu vas.)

