

HELP & HUMILITY

A STORY ABOUT HELP, ACCEPTANCE & HUMILITY

THE HELP WE REALLY NEEDED:

We needed help. Not the “read another parenting book” kind of help, the real, in-the-trenches support that comes when you finally admit you’re outmatched by a three-year-old. I researched like crazy, desperate to find someone who could come into our home and help us understand Chris.

Then one day, an article in the East Bay Times described a woman who had performed “magic” on an extremely challenging child. That was all I needed. Enter Doreen: a tattooed, pierced, Berkeley lesbian with the energy of someone who had seen every behavior imaginable and wasn’t intimidated by any of it.

And here we were, living in Pleasanton, California—a place so uniformly pleasant it practically sparkles. Upper middleclass, white, great schools, no crime. Vanillaville. And into this landscape walks Doreen, like a splash of neon paint across a beige wall.

She went everywhere with Chris—school, Pump It Up, the park. Watching the two of them together was comedy gold. My behaviorally unpredictable child and this punk-rock guardian angel playing alongside the Pleasanton mom brigade was a sight to behold. The sideways glances alone were worth their weight in gold.

But here’s the teachable moment, the part I want every parent of a neurodiverse child to hear:

A FAST TRACK TO HUMILITY:

When you have a Chris, you lose the ability to judge people based on appearances, stereotypes, or social norms. You stop caring about who “looks” like the right kind of therapist, teacher, or helper. You stop caring about what other parents think. You stop caring about the perfect image you thought you were supposed to maintain. Having a child on the spectrum is often a fast track to humility.

Because neurodiverse kids strip away everything that doesn’t matter.

They force you to see people for their heart, not their packaging. They teach you that help can come from the most unexpected places. They show you that the “right” person for your child might look nothing like the picture you had in your head. They remind you that parenting isn’t a performance; it’s a relationship.

THE TEACHABLE MOMENT:

Neurodiverse kids strip away everything that doesn’t matter. They force you to see people for their heart, not their packaging