# A Journey through Asper's Syndrome

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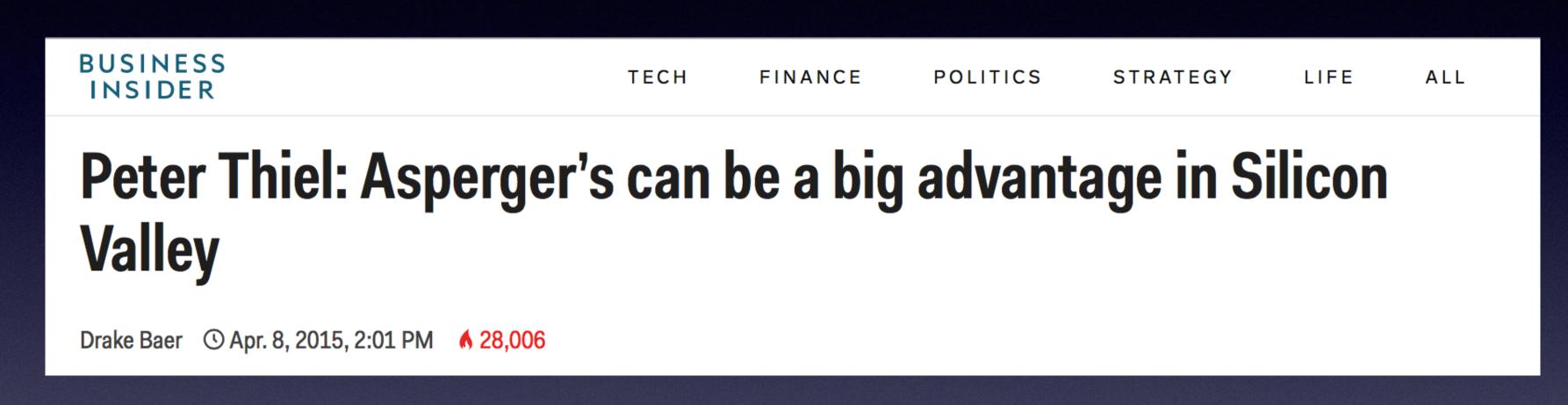
## Pre-Sharing Questions

- Why turn up for today's sharing session?
- How many of you are familiar with Asperger's Syndrome? (And by extension, the autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?)
- What are your impressions of ASD?
- Anybody around you with ASD?

## Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Spectrum range of both abilities and disabilities.
- Aspeger's Syndrome: higher intelligence than normal this is a strength!
  - Strengths can be used to gain acceptance.
  - But we need tools to cope with weaknesses.

# Is Asperger's Syndrome Really... a Problem?



http://www.businessinsider.com/peter-thiel-aspergers-is-an-advantage-2015-4/?IR=T&r=SG

Innovations

Why shades of Asperger's Syndrome are the secret to building a great tech company

## Timeline (not exhaustive)

Age	Event
9	Signs of disruptive behaviour in class
10	Diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome
14	A "Friend of Singa" Award
Now	Still Learning how to Cope Better?

# Playing to Strengths: A Case Study of Secondary School

- Good in mathematics but how to change perception?
- Volunteer to impart skills shows capability, not disability.
  - Bonus: a reason to operate meaningfully in a social context.

## Strategies

- Making friends is easier in the Aspie's comfort zone.
  - Lucky me: I could showcase my strength through Mathematics because of its importance for everyone (I ended up becoming a peer tutor)
  - Support structure: get Aspies socially involved in their strengths
     — interaction opportunity with peers on a more "friendly" footing.

# Progress



### Adulthood

- The good: some intelligence is helpful in navigating a far more complicated environment.
- The bad: emotional complexity remains a big challenge.

### Social Skills

- Since Aspies enjoy imitation, we tend to learn by observation and then analysing what works.
  - Explicit questions on "how their peers behave" in deriving acceptable social norms.
  - Personal thought: people-watching can be useful (but do not stare)

## Transition

- The real world is not as kind, so we must transit the Aspie gradually from the safe platforms to the real world.
- Since help cannot be around all the time, we need to think of:
  - Building up a toolbox of skills.
  - Building confidence for the Aspie to use these skills.

#### Toolbox of Skills

- "Corrective" toolbox to address Aspies' weaknesses.
  - Social skills
    - Breaking the ice, maintaining conversation, gracefully "exiting" conversations.
  - Interpreting nuances and subtlety in language
    - Not just verbal, but written. (social media is visual)
    - Written subtlety is particularly difficult the speedier change of use of language through memes, "trending" events.
  - Empathy
    - Not just interpretation of circumstances, but appropriate responses such as comfort, support and acceptance.
    - Emphasis on emotional assurance as opposed to rational discourse not everything is an after-action review!

## Questions?