Create Agency!

Suggestions for Emerging Atypicals

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This page is also available as a PDF article and a PowerPoint slideshow.

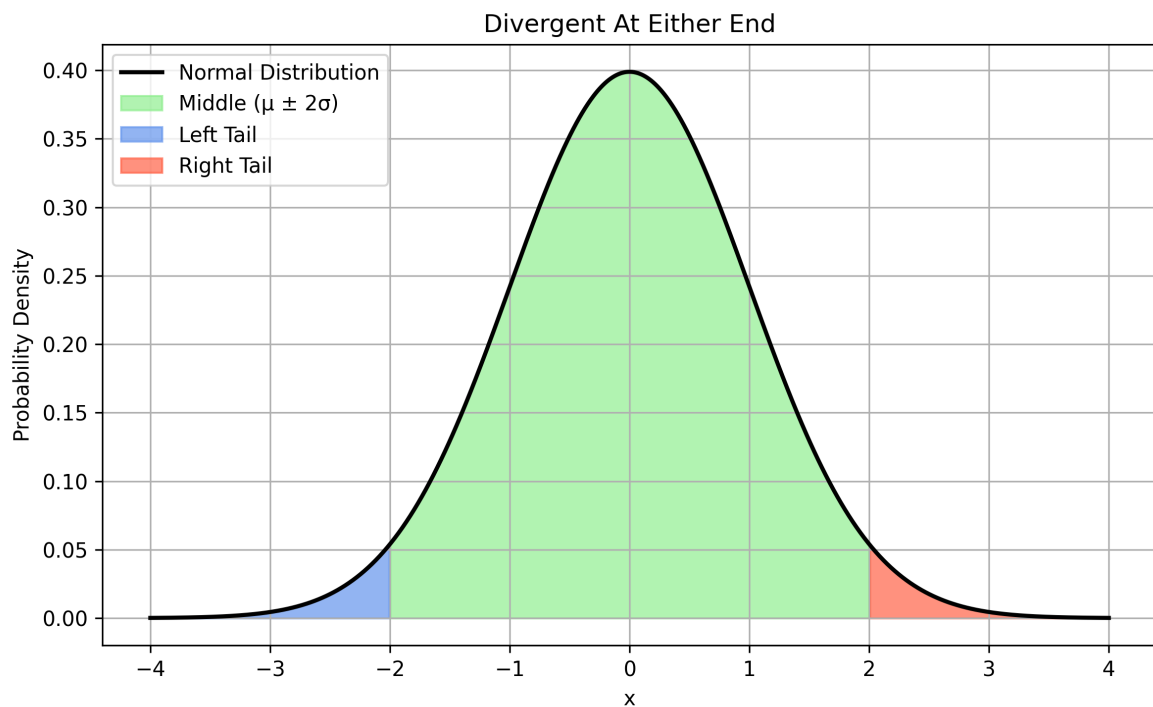## The Nature of Atypicality

Neuro "Divergent"
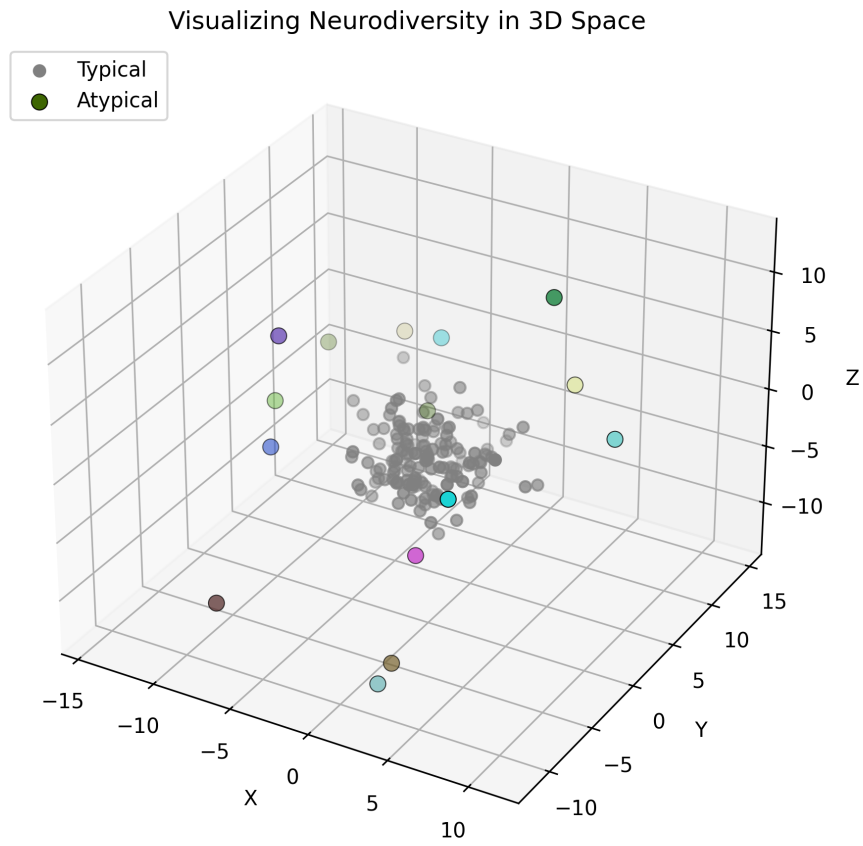

Figure 1: Distribution: Bell Curve

Neuro "Atypical"

Figure 2: Scatter: Clustered with Outliers

But Maybe...

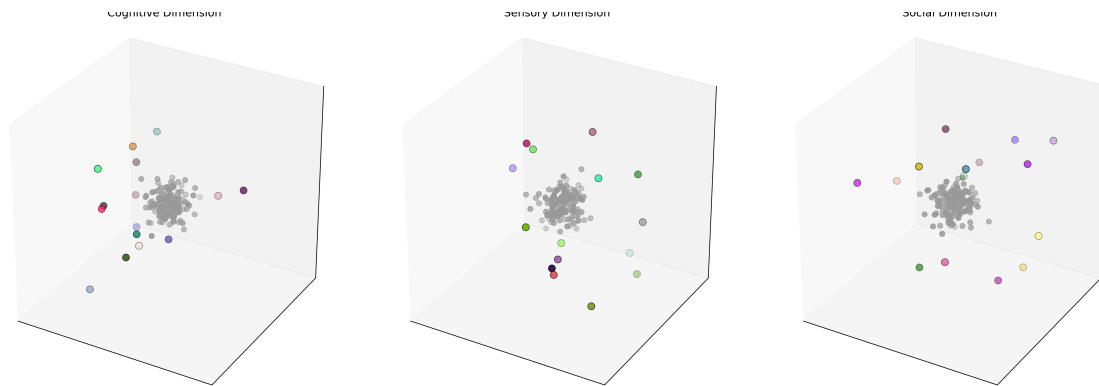Cognitive Dimension   Sensory Dimension   Social Dimension

Figure 3: Scatter: Many, Many Dimensions with Outliers

Agency

(1) We Function Best When Our Model is "All and Only"

The previous three slides represent mental models of our condition:

- The **3D model** helps me understand *myself* in relation to most people I meet. It's about orientation—where I stand, not just how far.

- The **bell curve** helps me understand how others tend to categorize me. It's their frame— not mine—but it's critical for functioning in society.

- The **Multi-D model** reminds me how *absurd* it is to think any single model can capture it all. Life is richer—and messier.

***Since we are all different kinds of atypical, create your own model.**

Suggestions: - Aim for accuracy over identity: Revise, revise, revise. - Consider that these are often the same: **Believe, Know, Suspect, Have Faith In.** - Be willing to be wrong—and change quickly. - "Don't believe everything you think." - I use the acronym CWH – Current Working Hypothesis – to remind myself: > It's okay to adjust the model as the data changes.

The Habit of Linguistic Restructure

The original title of this talk was

Using Linguisitic Transformation to Define An Agentic Path gets us to.

The Secrets of the Universe

"Begin Anywhere"

If There's a Path, Take a Step!

Let's practice with a game, "Hey Sherlock!"

If you see one, yell "Opportunity"

> "We are not broken."
> That's the only time I'll say it.
>
> Because focus takes practice.
> And this talk is about **building**, not reacting.

Audience rule:
 If I slip back into talking about what we are not—
Yell "BZZZ!"

Universal Principle #1

Tools make things easier

> If a tool doesn't reduce friction, it's not a tool—it's an ornament.

My Origin Story

- First autistic diagnosis in Houston, TX

- Parents: Biology professors with scientific instincts

- Fairhill Elementary: early adaptive education

- Learned to build systems—and learned to **omit myself** from them

Universal Principle #2

You can choose your conversations

> You don't owe your attention to every signal.
> You can step in. You can step out. You can rewrite your role.

Theory of Everything (ToE)

My ToE: - All information is culturally transmitted
- Cultures are sets of conversations
- Conversations are bundles of information

I use this to choose where—and how—I participate.

CWH: Working Hypotheses

> "Believe," "know," "understand"—for me, they're all shorthand for:
> **Current Working Hypothesis**

This gives me: - Flexibility without shame
- Strength without arrogance
- A toolbox, not a dogma

Universal Principle #3

Accurate models enable effective action

Example: Jobs
- Companies may see NA employees as risky
- Consultants = lower perceived risk
- I don't apply—I **propose**
→ And that has opened doors a résumé couldn't

Final Principle (for now)

> **You will build your own tools.**
> These are mine.
> Use them as blanks. Modify. Break. Rebuild.

The point isn't to follow—
It's to **practice agency** by modeling and building in your own way.

Thank You

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