

Although the focus must be on the strengths of the teenagers with autism, Dr Stephen Shore reminds us to be cognisant of the specific needs or as he calls them “challenges” too.

Strengths	Challenges
Attention to detail	Grasping the “big” picture
Often highly skilled in a particular area	Uneven set of skills
Deep study resulting in encyclopaedic knowledge on areas of interest	Difficulty in developing motivation to study areas not of interest
Tendency to be logical (helpful in decision-making where emotions may interfere)	Difficulty perceiving emotional states of other
Less concern for what others may think of them (can be a strength and a challenge).	Perceiving unwritten rules of social interaction. But can learn these rules through direct instruction and social narratives social as Power Cards (Gagnon, 2004)
Also known as independent thinking. Often results in novel "big picture" insights due to different ways of looking at things, ideas, and concepts.	Difficulty processing in non-favourite modalities such as aural, kinaesthetic, etc.
Usually visual processing (thinking in pictures or video)	Difficulty parsing out and summarising important information for a conversation
Often very verbal (Propensity of giving detailed descriptions may be useful in providing directions to lost persons)	Sensory integration problems where input may register unevenly, distorted, and difficulty in screening out background noise
Direct communication	Honesty
Loyalty	Generalisation of skills and concepts
Honesty	Difficulty expressing empathy in ways that others expect or understand
Non-judgemental listening	Executive functioning resulting in difficulties planning long-term tasks

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/asperger-syndrome-and-high-functioning-autism-tool-kit/strengths-and-chall>