

## Typing is a social equalizer for autistic people.

Whether it be on a phone, a keyboard, a letterboard, or through AAC, typed words allow autistic people to express our thoughts in a way that truly represents what we mean.

**There's no body language or tone of voice involved in typing.** There's no stuttering, and no trouble coordinating your mouth. Sentences can be re-read and edited before delivery. You can type slowly or quickly. You can think out each word carefully before writing it.

**Several studies** have shown that neurotypicals are much more open and receptive to autistic people when talking to us through text-based methods, rather than in-person.

In text-based communication, people's words are just their words, and neurotypicals pay more attention to the message conveyed. But in-person, neurotypicals pay more attention to the way the message was delivered, which means that autistic people are at a disadvantage (given that we're often perceived as awkward and unusual during in-person conversations, bc of our differences in body language and tone of voice).

Typing is also typically *easier* for autistic people than speaking is. I usually say what I mean when I'm speaking, but **it takes more effort to coordinate and I rely a lot on complex echolalia, palalia, and scripts.** I sometimes sound robotic, and my parents often repeat things I've said in a mock robot voice to poke fun at me.

Along those lines, **typing is an equalizer between autistic people who can speak and those who can't.** It offers a way for nonspeaking autistic people to fully reveal their inner thoughts and experiences, and to advocate for themselves in a way they wouldn't necessarily be able to otherwise.

So basically: I'm super glad that typing exists. And I'm glad that the internet is a primarily text-based avenue for communication. The internet has opened so many doors for autistic people, and allowed us to find each other & make autistic friends in a way that just wasn't possible before the 1990s.

Technology can be used to help disabled people in ways that nondisabled people weren't even thinking of when they created it. **Over the past three decades, keyboards and computers have empowered autistic people to advocate for ourselves in a way that's actually quite historically unprecedented.**

And I, for one, am delighted by that.

~Eden 🐸