


AUTONOMOUS OVER INDEPENDENT

Part 1

**Reframe your language,
reframe your practice**



WHAT IS INDEPENDENCE?

AND WHY IS IT
A VALUE?

@NeuroClastic

FROM MERRIAM WEBSTER

not requiring or
relying on others (as
for care or
livelihood)

FROM DICTIONARY.COM

not dependent; not
depending or
contingent upon
something else for
existence, operation,
etc.

not relying on another
or others for aid or
support.



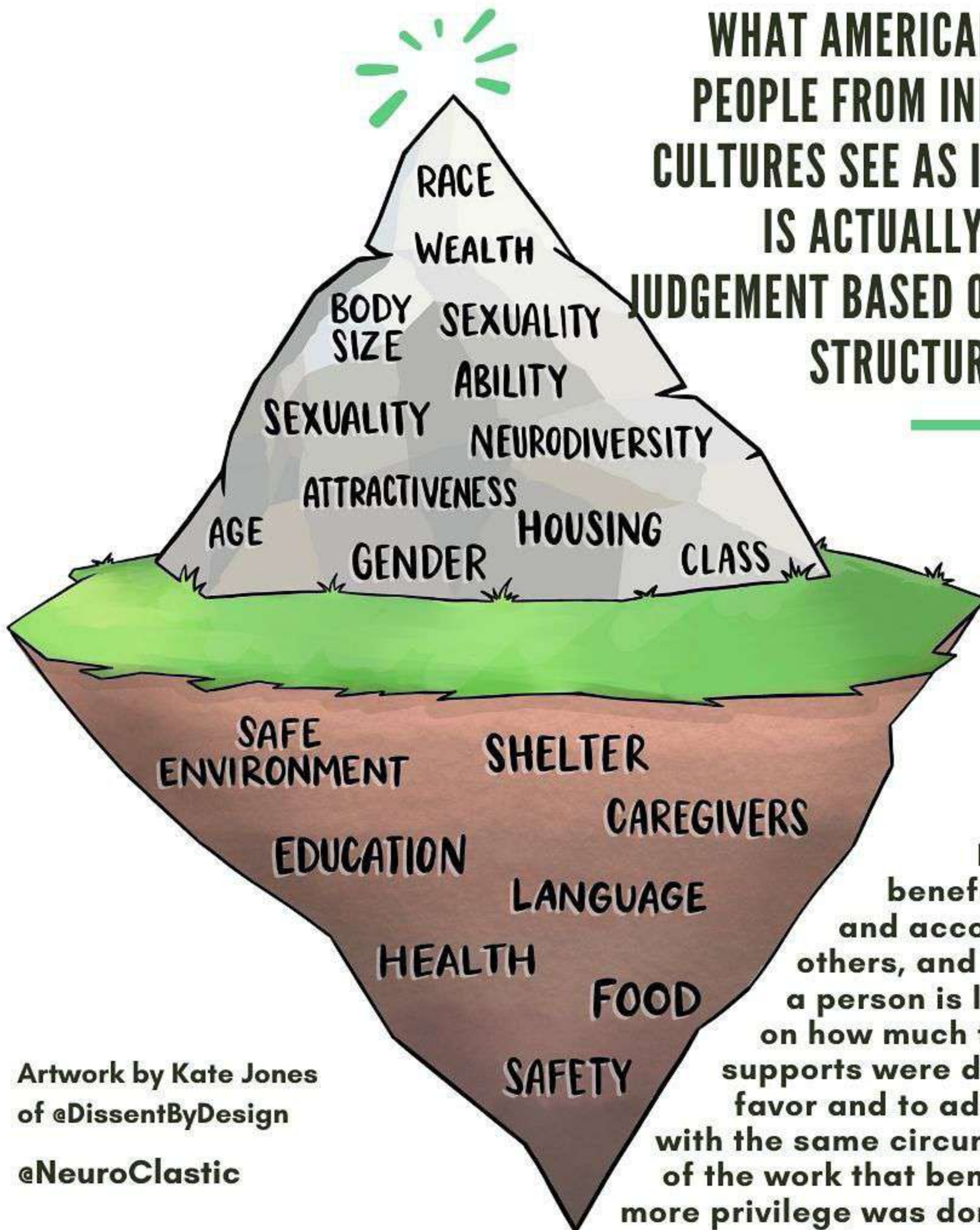
**INDEPENDENCE IS A
MYTH. NO ONE LIVES
INDEPENDENTLY.**

**CAN YOU THINK OF SOMEONE
WHO IS INDEPENDENT?**



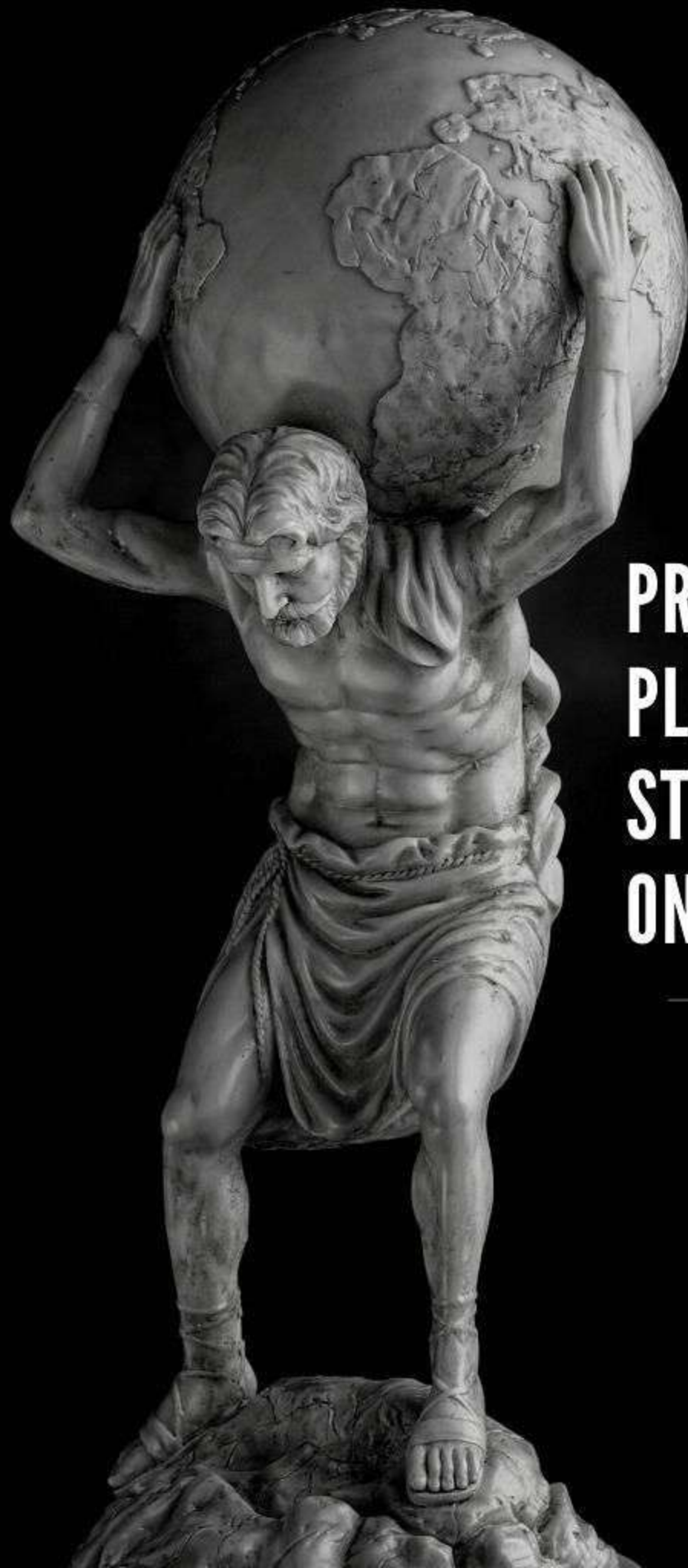
**WHEN YOU READ
ABOUT AUTISM,
FROM RESOURCES
CREATED BY NON-
AUTISTICS, THE
FOCUS IS ON
"PROGRAMMING"
AUTISTIC PEOPLE
TO BE MORE
"INDEPENDENT."**

WHAT AMERICANS AND OTHER PEOPLE FROM INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURES SEE AS INDEPENDENCE IS ACTUALLY JUST A VALUE JUDGEMENT BASED ON ACCESS TO STRUCTURAL PRIVILEGE.



In reality, we all benefit from the work and accomplishments of others, and how successful a person is largely depends on how much those structural supports were designed in their favor and to advantage people with the same circumstances. Much of the work that benefits those with more privilege was done by exploiting those with less privilege.

Artwork by Kate Jones
of @DissentByDesign
@NeuroClastic



PRIORITIZING INDEPENDENCE PLACES THE WEIGHT OF STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION ON DISABLED PEOPLE

Independence is a value, not a reality. It is a measure of how valid someone is in a capitalist society based on how well they can perform without supports, making the need for support seem too entitled or like a burden on the economy.



Society sells independence like it is some type of path to freedom. I like to say that freedom is the ability to live the life that you so want to live. If I wait for independence, I will miss much of what I want to experience. I want to go live a full life. I need help to make that happen. Autonomy makes my life meaningful, gives me freedom, and makes my life worth living.

- Wyatt T. Dutton
Nonspeaking Autistic Advocate

Wyatt illustrates that without the support needed, he has less autonomy. True freedom is not freedom from supports, but the access to engage in life given the supports others with structural privilege have a "default" rights.

The point about independence is not understood - that it takes praxis not intelligence. While autonomy can be exercised if support for praxis is given.

-Sid



Sid is a nonspeaking autistic advocate. Praxis (the root of the words "apraxia" and "dyspraxia") means translating an idea, or a desired movement, into action. Instead of thinking that motor planning is equivalent to the ability to communicate, learn, and even think— the focus should be on supports for motor planning until a person has the communication access they need.

A focus on
autonomy mirrors
structural
privilege.

Relinquishing
control is
necessary to
support autonomy.

