

AUTONOMOUS OVER INDEPENDENT

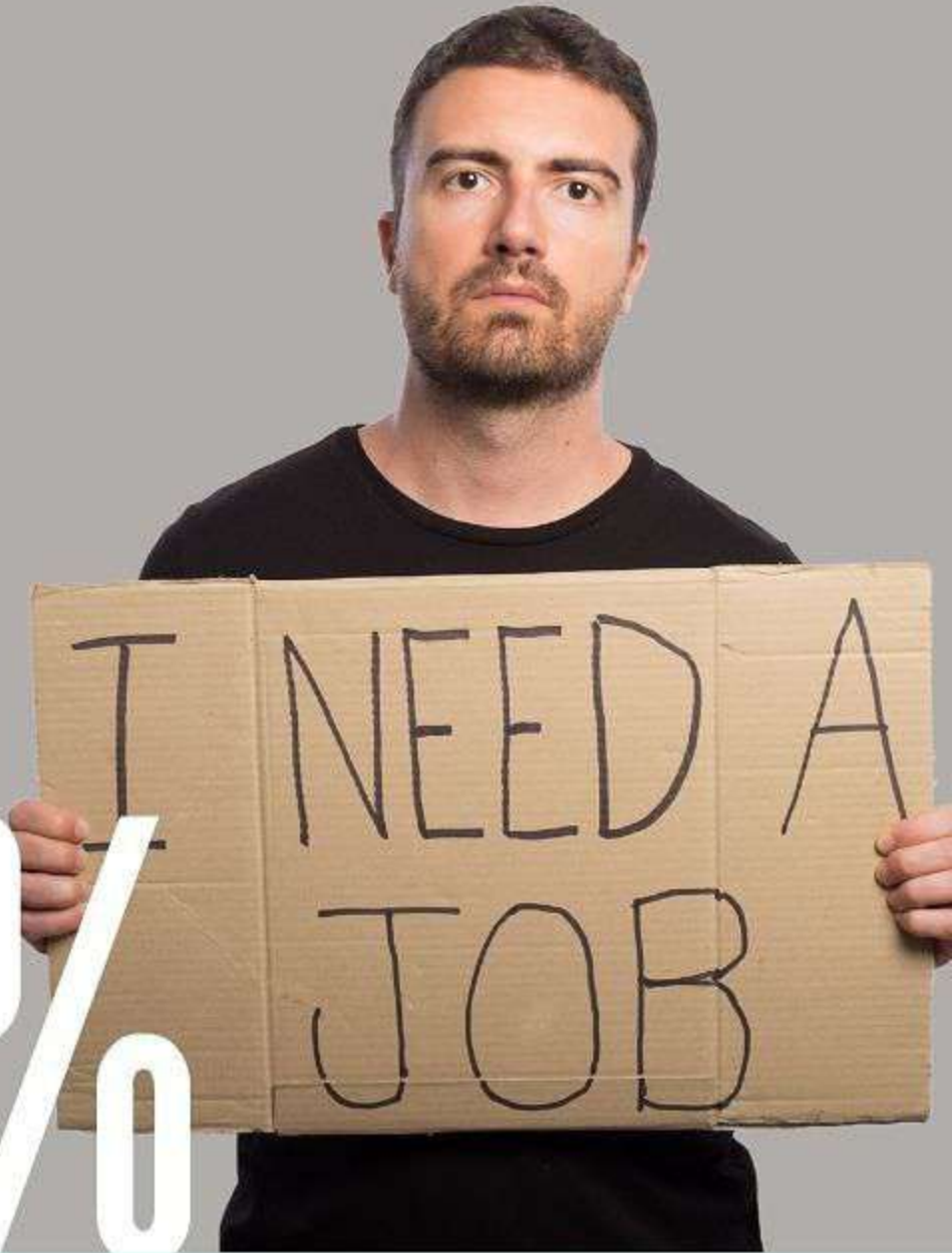
Part 3

**Reframe your language,
reframe your practice.**

**On how independence
is not the problem**

COMPARED TO 4% OF THE
GENERAL POPULATION

85.00%



OF AUTISTIC COLLEGE GRADUATES ARE UNEMPLOYED

Mark, an autistic man, was working in a garage associated with a locally-owned car dealership. Mark was always on time, was great at fixing everything and problem-solving, never missed work, and never had any problems. His employer, the owner of the dealership, took note and promoted Mark to the sales floor.




At first, Mark was working in small sales-tires, service plans, accessories, etc. One day, the floor was busy and one of the top car salespeople, Scott, came to assist Mark. Scott finished a slip Mark had started. Concerned with following the rules, Mark approached the senior salesperson and asked him, "Aren't we supposed to finish all tickets we start?"





Scott believed Mark was passive-aggressively accusing him of trying to steal Mark's commission- just a few dollars- on a tire sale.

Mark was simply trying to watch out for Scott and himself by following the rules and ensuring neither of them got in trouble for breaking protocol.

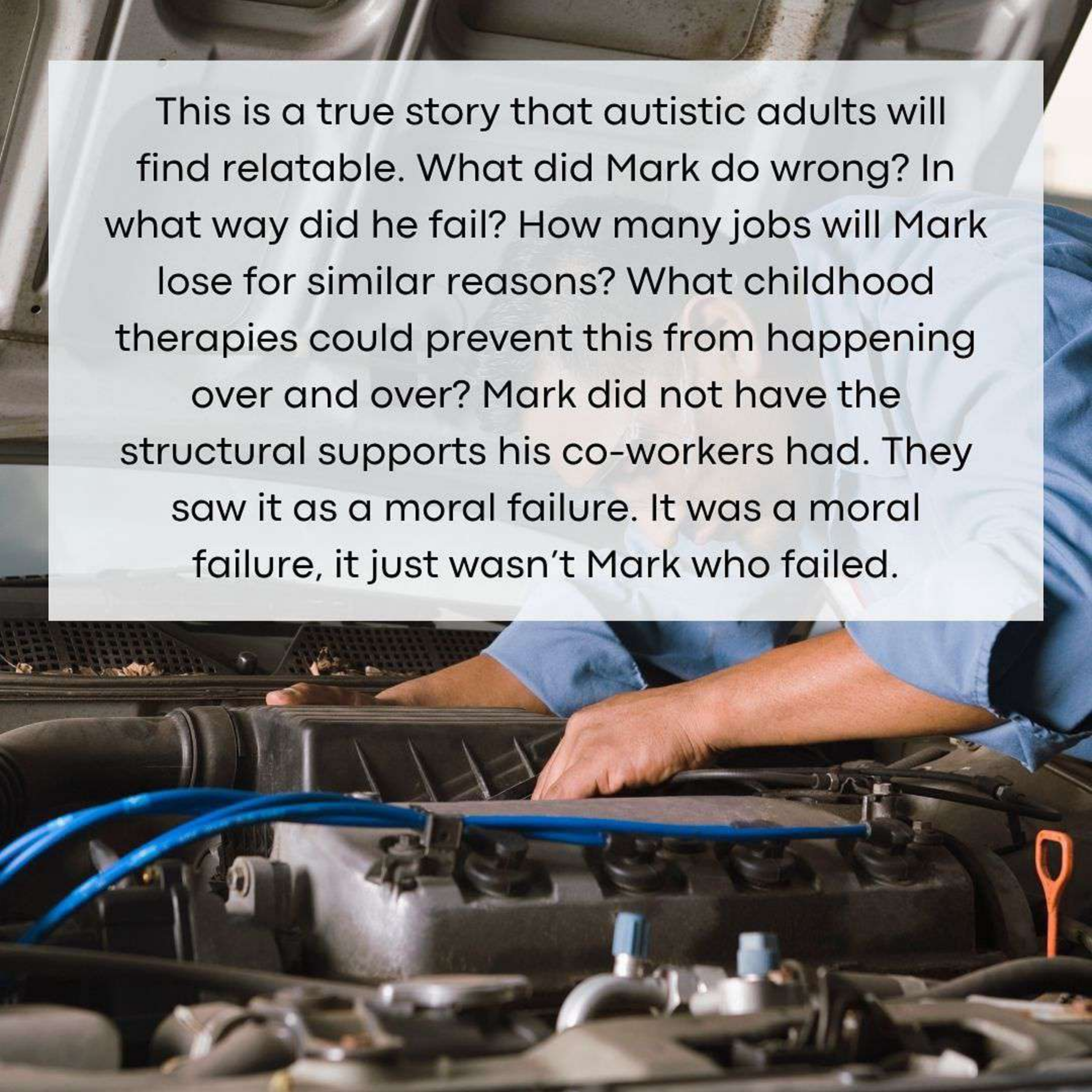
A crumpled piece of pink paper and a blue and white checkered necktie are lying on a dark wooden surface. The pink paper is crumpled into a ball, and the necktie is folded and lies to the left of the paper. The wooden surface has a visible grain.

Scott went to management and complained about Mark, ranting that he “Just wasn’t a fit for the culture.” Mark was let go after the third simple misunderstanding.

What happened to Mark is an example of how as someone moves up in a career, the social nuances of the workplace culture are less concrete and more intuitive. Mark flourished in the garage because all expectations were concrete, and he only needed to solve mechanical problems.

Independence is not really the problem.



A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt is working on the engine of a car. The engine is open, and various components like hoses and metal parts are visible. The person's hands are on the engine, and they appear to be focused on the task. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the car's interior and the person's torso.

This is a true story that autistic adults will find relatable. What did Mark do wrong? In what way did he fail? How many jobs will Mark lose for similar reasons? What childhood therapies could prevent this from happening over and over? Mark did not have the structural supports his co-workers had. They saw it as a moral failure. It was a moral failure, it just wasn't Mark who failed.

A lack of knowledge is not the problem. A lack of skills is not the problem. Autistic people are actually great at learning all about their trade and mastering the work.

The problem is that the expectations of a job are that they are performed in the same way that non-autistic people perform them and that social norms are expected to be intuited.

Our intuition will never lead us to behave like a non-autistic person.

A stack of several books is shown on the right side of the image. The books are of various thicknesses and colors, mostly in shades of brown and tan. One of the spines of the books has a watermark that reads '@NeuroClastic' in a light-colored font. The background is dark, making the books stand out.



Autistic people don't need to be pushed into independence— or a life of feeling like all their roadblocks are moral failures. Autistic people need to be validated that, yes, other people's misconceptions and biases are often why they don't succeed. They aren't failing; they're being failed.

NEUROCLASTIC