

Brother Basil

JOSEPH NOBLE HOFFMAN

200 Messages of Love, Acceptance, and Understanding

Winner of the International Ulbrecht Award for Spiritual Non-Fiction

Praise with Poem:

“Brother Basil is an advocate for peace during a time of chaos and upheaval as we disconnect with humanity and dive into the Digital Age. Joseph inspires the reader to think beyond our ritualistic journey and to explore our sense of self and higher purpose. Their book soothes the spirit and aligns the soul as we learn practical tactics that we can apply on a daily basis.

I cannot see the steps I take to move forward thus

Yet I take them with a fervor and delicious stride

Never knowing where my feet will land

But certain each step is purposeful and enlightened

As I begin my journey each day upward towards the light”

GREGORY COPPLOE,

ARTIST, SPIRITUALIST, AND AUTHOR OF “THE ART OF BEING WHOLE”

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“There’s a horrid photo of me wearing a dinosaur print apron and huge pink rhinestone sunglasses on display downstairs.” the soft male voice said in my ear. “Please remove it.”

I didn’t even turn my head to determine the speaker because I knew that I had merely overheard a random snippet of conversation directed at someone else. The funeral mass for Brother Basil had just ended, and it was a fitting tribute to the man’s life that nearly two hundred people had come to pay their respects. I knew none of them, so I sat by myself in the back pew. Everyone was now crowding out of the sanctuary and down a narrow stairwell to what Madelyn always called the-church-snack-and-chat.

When I reached the bottom of the stairs, there were two huge old-fashioned cardboard poster boards on tripods with photo snapshots of Brother Basil’s life sticky glued in a photo collage. And there was the photo, prominently displayed. The photo was indeed horrible. Taken from a peculiar angle, Brother Basil looked both hugely fat and weirdly demented. Standing with the shifting group admiring the collage, I realized that the dead man had asked me for a personal favor. I wanted to scream!!

Gathering my wits, and determined to grant Brother Basil’s request, I started asking complete strangers if anyone knew who had assembled the poster boards, intending to offer the Church a donation in exchange for the photo. No one seemed to know. I tried circulating through the group to determine if anyone was a relative. No one seemed to know. People were starting to eye the complete stranger asking questions suspiciously. I circled back to the collage area where people were now using their phones to

take photos of the photos. I was feeling frustrated and out of reasonable options. People kept taking pictures of the photo and laughing. Laughing at Brother Basil who didn't want to be remembered by that image. My job to remove it.

In desperation, I did something ridiculous. Something so completely out of character that I can't believe I did it. I actually pulled the photo off the poster board in front of everyone and dashed up the Church stairs and onto the street! To my surprise, and relief, no one followed me.

Sitting on the bus headed home and staring in disbelief at the photo in my hand, a soft male voice chuckled in my ear. Later that evening, Brother Basil arrived with Madelyn to visit Joseph and me. Joseph was over-joyed to have two Spirit visitors, Madelyn approved of Brother Basil's book project, and I was glad to help but uncertain of my mediumship abilities. Books have been successfully channeled from the Spirit side, most recently "A Course In Miracles" by Dr. Helen Schucman first published in 1975, but unlike her I cannot take short-hand dictation and when listening I need to close my eyes and completely focus in a quiet space. I asked Brother Basil why he had chosen me out of the group of two hundred mourners. He explained that he had made the exact same request of everyone, but mine had been the only response. Only I had heard his voice.

Madelyn, Joseph and I met Brother Basil years before when he was still a practicing medical doctor, Dr. William Thomas Edwards (Dr. Tom). Joseph was in severe crisis, and Dr. Tom saved him.

But I've gotten ahead of myself and not made proper introductions! I'm Sue, Joseph's mother and Madelyn's daughter. Madelyn is, of course, Joseph's grandmother, and Joseph is ... unique. Joseph is a living Angel Spirit which is a bold statement this early in the story and something that even I didn't understand for many years of his life. Modern medical science, devoid of spirituality, labels Joseph's outward symptoms as "autism". Labels should be reserved for boxed food, not people!

What is Autism? It is a medical diagnosis based upon a set of neurobehavioral symptoms. The following information is excerpted from the National Institute of Mental Health Website and the Autism Speaks Website informational pages:

“Many people with Autism have unusual responses to sensory input (also called stimuli). These responses are due to difficulties in processing and integrating sensory information. Vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, the sense of movement (vestibular system) and the sense of position (proprioception) can all be affected”. This means that while information may be sensed normally, it may be perceived much differently. Joseph has difficulty with sensory integration and making “sense” of the outside world. He may seem indifferent, but he’s actually overwhelmed and attempting to process, which is why he needs some quiet solitude to meditate and gather his thoughts.

“This process of the brain organizing and interpreting sensory information is called sensory integration. People with sensory dysfunction can experience stimuli that seem “normal” to others as painful, unpleasant or confusing. ... Hyposensitivity might be apparent in an increased tolerance of pain or a constant need for sensory stimulation.” Joseph sometimes bangs his head or otherwise unconsciously self-injures because it actually feels good to him even though it makes the neurotypical witnesses wince. “Some people with Autism are oblivious to extreme cold or heat, ... they may fall and break an arm, yet never cry. Responses to sensory overload can range from shutting down and “checking out” of the environment, to preoccupation or distraction.”

Enough about autism, let’s get back to first meeting Dr. Tom and the miracle he performed for Joseph. Joseph was in extreme crisis. It’s true as you’ve just read that sometimes Joseph engages in repetitive behavior that leads to minor self-injury (like biting your fingernails habitually even though they’re already sore), but this was different. Scary different. Joseph

was poking himself in his eye with his own finger. Repeatedly, rapidly, and with determination. Drawing blood and refusing to be distracted into stopping. He was going to blind himself, and I got desperate so I grabbed his wrists to make him stop. My sweet son who cannot physically speak in words but enthusiastically vocalizes happy sounds, growled at me like a feral animal and struggled with amazing strength to free himself so that he could continue the task of going blind. I refused to let go, and Joseph did something that he had never done before or after, he bit me. He bit me really hard!

Grimly, I held on. Madelyn was still alive, and she had gone for help. Madelyn was coming back and everything would be all right because she always knew what Joseph needed. Madelyn would save us. And she did. Madelyn brought us Dr. Tom who was a world-renowned pain management physician at the University of Washington Medical Center and who, when he retired from medicine, took Benedictine vows and became Brother Basil. Dr. Tom took one look at Joseph locked in battle with me, and did something amazing. Something completely non-medical. Something spiritually in keeping with his later life as Brother Basil. Something exactly right. Dr. Tom laid his hands upon Joseph's head and started to pray. Joseph kicked him. Dr. Tom prayed harder. The three of us were locked in battle when suddenly Joseph relaxed, and it was over! Sweet Joseph had returned and looked totally confused about what had just happened. Madelyn and I thought it was a miracle worthy of sainthood. Dr. Tom explained that he walked in personal obedience to God's will and that saving Joseph fulfilled his purpose as an Intercessor of the Church to war on behalf of others against evil and discern the heart of God.

It was Dr. Tom, in a revelation of his true calling as Brother Basil, who discovered that Joseph had been attacked because as an earthbound Angel Spirit with prophetic destiny Joseph is a target for destructive forces bent on possession. Joseph is an Angel! In his instruction to Madelyn and me to be

ever vigilant of the soul placed in our care, Dr. Tom quoted 1 Corinthians 2:4: “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power”.

What type of destructive forces? I’m going to use an unfashionable word, but there’s no way around it, demonic possession. Have you rolled your eyes? Me too, but Joseph is susceptible because he is a spiritually open innocent soul. Think demons only existed in Medieval times? Try reading “Deliver Us From Evil”, the modern day nonfiction demonic experiences of New York police detective Ralph Sarchie.

How does Joseph’s spirit manifest? If Joseph understands what you want, he will do his very best to accommodate you. He is also extremely empathetic and appreciates a smile and pleasant tone of voice. Sometimes, his reactions are misinterpreted. For example, if you are crying Joseph will attempt to comfort you by laughing, not because he thinks crying is funny or he is unsympathetic, but because he wants you to stop crying and feel happier by laughing too! Joseph is a lovely human being with an Angel Spirit nature.

Before I truly understood, when people asked about him, I explained that it’s easier to think of Joseph not as my son, but as my cat. Spending the day thinking happy cat thoughts, feeling safe, and comfortable, and well fed, and unconditionally loved. That is how he “seems”, and he is certainly safe, comfortable, well-fed, and loved, but the reality is that he is busy focusing mental energy on reaching out beyond what the “normal” world perceives.

Does Joseph have Autism? Yes. But Autism is a modern medical label for people who process and understand spiritual energy information in a manner misunderstood by society. Although the ancients often revered people with spiritual gifts, modern society marginalizes, tortures, and drugs those deemed disabled, defective, inferior.

Autistic brains work differently. MRI scans during research studies at San Diego State University and Stanford University revealed that Autistic people physically have greater connectivity than “normal” people in the areas of the visual and extrastriate cortices (which control sight) and the temporal lobe (which controls processing and associating sensory input). In both studies, the brains of people with severe Autism showed substantially greater resting connectedness than the brains of those less severely impacted. Both Autistic groups showed substantially greater resting connectedness than the “normal” control group brains.

Is Autism common? Yes, and the numbers are rising, although the label is applied to a wide spectrum of behavioral traits and does not necessarily indicate Spiritual ability. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics indicate that 1 in 88 American children are Autistic in varying degrees of functionality. This a ten-fold increase in diagnosis over 40 years with 2 million people labeled Autistic in the U.S., and tens of millions worldwide. This is an incredibly stupid statement, but I have been asked, Autism is NOT contagious!

Why the increased numbers? Partially increased reporting and diagnosis. But there is an actual statistical increase in people like Joseph. People who are super-sensitive, super-empathic, and functionally impaired. There is a growing awareness in the Spiritual community of this increase. Awareness that a message is being sent. A message that needs to be heard before the world crisis worsens. You know how much I hate labeling people, but labels have been created in an attempt to understand and quantify. In addition to the many types of intuitive knowledge (clairvoyance, clairsentience, clairescence, clairempathy, etc.), Crystal, Hybrid, Indigo, Rainbow, and the ancient Jewish Emunah tradition which has thousands of contemporary followers, are some of the Spiritual labels recognizing different attributes of spiritually gifted Autistic people such as Joseph. There has also been extensive discussion, and research documenting Autistic sensitivity for

communication with “ghosts” (spirits of dead people). Joseph frequently communicates with relatives and friends, and sometimes strangers seeking a sensitive soul.

I object to all of these labels because they limit and categorize. Perhaps the ancient civilizations were wise, accepting that differently connected people channel spiritual innocence and truth, unable to lie or deceive for personal gain. People functioning on a different level to be revered, respected and accepted exactly as they are: uniquely gifted.

Is Autism a disability? Yes. From a day-to-day life functional standpoint, Joseph is physically impaired, but his life is a different design because his mind is wired differently.

Are people with Autism important and valued members of society? Yes. “To measure the success of our societies, we should examine how well those with different abilities, including persons with Autism, are integrated as full and valued members.” Ban Ki-Moon, Former United Nations Secretary-General. Joseph often seeks out and enjoys solitude to quiet his hyper-sensitivity and listen to the unspoken dialogue. Joseph is listening, even when it seems like he’s not paying attention, Joseph is listening inwardly. Joseph’s Spirit friends are always within him. Sometimes, the message is so compelling that Joseph suddenly laughs, or screams!

Can people with Autism functionally improve? Absolutely! Joseph has made great improvements in his social and functional abilities. He makes eye contact, watches facial expression, aims to please, and has a sweet, loving nature. Sometimes, functional inability is actually a misunderstanding. For years, Joseph flunked the Mirror Test, an assessment technique developed by psychologist Gordon Gallup Jr. to determine visual self-recognition. The tester makes a lipstick mark on the subject’s cheek and then places him in front of a mirror. If the subject wipes off the mark, it is considered to be successful visual self-recognition. Joseph always failed. When Joseph and I connected telepathically, I discovered that Joseph had recognized his

reflection. He thought that the tester wanted him to leave the deliberately placed lipstick on his cheek!

Does Joseph want to be “normal”? It would be easier from a functional perspective. He wouldn’t be dependent on others for his daily needs and he would be capable of independent living as an adult man. Being able to clearly physically speak would make communication easy and specific. But to Joseph, his life IS normal because he is the way he is supposed to be.

Joseph can communicate messages in words, so why doesn’t he physically speak words with his mouth so that everyone can hear? Joseph’s personal thoughts are in visions and music combined with relevant words and names. Brother Basil, Madelyn and I interpret Joseph’s thoughts and feelings into complete sentences for communication clarity. Words are an abstraction, and Joseph is primarily a visual thinker. All of the passages in the body of this book concerning Joseph’s experiences are his personal thoughts, opinions, and observations.

Can people with Autism be very functional and still very different? Yes. Albert Einstein is my favorite Autistic celebrity. Many researchers, most recently Professor Simon Baron-Cohen from the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University and Ioan James from Oxford University, have concluded that Albert Einstein had a high functioning form of Autism (recognized as a diagnosis in 1994) labeled Asperger Syndrome. Einstein said: “I very rarely think in words at all. A thought comes, and I may try to express it in words afterwards.”

Just like Joseph, Albert Einstein thinks in visions, not words! Is Joseph a high functioning genius? Of course not, but Joseph is much more than he appears to be. His beloved grandmother called him an angel from the moment of his birth. I didn’t understand that she was being literal.

My great grandmother was a strong empath. I lived with her until her death when I was in High School, and witnessed first-hand her ability to

“know” and communicate with the other side. My grandmother regarded the “gift” as a curse. As a small child I played with relatives who had passed-over. One of my earliest memories was being told by my grandmother never to tell anyone about my “imaginary” friends because I would be taken away to the “looney bin”. I stopped acknowledging my friends, and eventually they went away.

Madelyn, my mother, never spoke of her talents, so I assumed that she had none. I was wrong, again.

When Madelyn died suddenly, I was devastated. She was my “support system” and Joseph’s strongest advocate. She started guiding me to understand that I didn’t understand Joseph. She was much more than the “imaginary” friends of my childhood, so I listened. I listened to her. And I listened to Joseph. Not with my ears, but with my soul. I discovered that Joseph, who is not functional in this world, can communicate from the other side!

I resisted. How can this possibly be true? How can he have a message for the world? Why is Joseph so unable on this side, and so able on the other side? What am I supposed to do about it? Why him? Why me? I received an unexpected and, I admit, unwelcomed answer.

Why not him? Why not me?

Throughout history, messengers have been ... different. Different looking. Different acting. Different thinking. Different, and chosen. Different, and receptive to the message.

Consider four revered biblical messengers from my traditional Christian upbringing. Isaiah preached naked. Jeremiah stored his underwear under a rock and wore a cattle-yoke around his shoulders. Ezekiel, who is recognized as a prophet in Christianity, Islam and Judaism, was not only rendered nonverbal for a substantial time period, he ate a scroll, laid down for months with a clay tablet and an iron pot, evidenced obsessive behavior with his own hair, and envisioned bones coming to life. Zacharias, father of

John the Baptist, was rendered mute and remained speechless immediately following his encounter with the Angel Gabriel. "... the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad ...” (Hosea 9:7). "Seeing" is a spiritual gift allowing the seer to visually see and communicate with the other side, the Spirit realm. It is usually a conscious, meditative act requiring concentration and ritual. Joseph welcomes Spirit visitors, but does not usually initiate contact, although he is capable of summoning.

Modern science has attempted to quantify this spiritual gift, suggesting that the mystical "third eye" is activation of the pineal gland permitting spiritual consciousness. Dr Robert Sapolsky, a neuro-endocrinologist and researcher at Stanford University, theorizes that the majority of the saints, sages, shamans, seers, and prophets possess a biological gene that has been genetically passed from the ancients to the present day. The advanced ability to communicate with Spiritual consciousness may be genetic!

Does Joseph possess this biological gene? Hopefully. There is no scientific test for this genetic blessing, but the spiritual hyper-sensitivity of Autism has been linked with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), which is being extensively studied for genetic "markers". Unfortunately, in contemporary society, Spiritual functioning is treated as a brain disease to be diagnosed and eliminated!

Scientists regard consciousness as a brain function (limbic, neocortex, reptilian), categorizing and denigrating as mentally diseased those who defy the norm such as the contemporary Bengali spiritual leader Amandamayi Ma (1896-1982) who was revered around the world for her enlightenment, healing powers, and Siddhis (Divine gifts). Scientists dismissed her as simple minded and epileptic because of her ability to reach and sustain samadhi (a trance state of super-consciousness) that rendered her functionally unable to care for herself.

Modern psychology looks at the mind (unconscious, subconscious, conscious), focusing upon the contents of the mind (conceptual thought,

rational analysis) and dismissing as unimportant the moment-to-moment stream of consciousness so important for awareness. So important, for example, to the Buddhist concept of “mindstream”. Joseph has conscious awareness of the Source without preconceptions and analysis.

It should come as no surprise that there exists a standardized manual (DSM-5) for the diagnosis of people with different minds such as those labeled schizophrenic (and in need of treatment to destroy any abnormal levels of consciousness). Some of the indications leading to the diagnostic label of schizophrenia requiring medical intervention (the list is extensive) are: “... odd beliefs or magical thinking that influences behavior and is inconsistent with subcultural norms (e.g., superstitiousness, belief in clairvoyance, telepathy or “sixth sense” ...); behavior or appearance that is odd, eccentric, or peculiar ...”. On a positive note, the DSM-5 has recently reclassifies seeing spirits (in a religious context) as no longer being an indicator of schizophrenia. Before the diagnostic label “Autism” existed, the diagnosis was “childhood schizophrenia” and those with this label were routinely tortured and institutionalized. Spirituality, which cannot be physically quantified, is neither acknowledged nor understood.

Spirituality looks to the soul for spirit consciousness. Spirituality is different from religion. Religion implies structure and a conscious practicing of communal faith. I am a Christian. I wear a cross symbolic of my faith on a chain around my neck, and I attend a Pastor led communal service every Sunday at a designated time in a Church.

I also experience Spirituality. Spirituality is individual. We can share our spiritual beliefs and the wisdom gained through higher communication, but the journey is undertaken by each person according to their abilities. Joseph is hyper-sensitive to external stimuli causing rational mind distractions, but also hyper-sensitive to intuitive Spirituality. Joseph’s consciousness resides in his soul.

“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Is Joseph a spirit realm messenger? Yes. He communicates not only with Brother Basil, but also with his beloved Grandmother and others who have passed from this life. The dead are dangerous because they cannot be intimidated or threatened (Philippians 1:20) The dead are always watchful, and they always tell the Truth.

Brother Basil and Joseph bring us the Spiritual gift of motivational prophesy.

Why was Joseph chosen? Because of his openness and lack of ego or pretense.

Why was I chosen? Because I am blessed to be Joseph’s mother. I have also been blessed to hear the message and tasked with publication.

Why have you been chosen to receive this message? Because you are ready, and tasked with accepting and acting upon the message.

Brother Basil’s salutation upon arrival and departure is: “Joseph’s Blessing”. I have received permission to include these words at the end of each message in this book as a blessing to all who read them.

How does the communication work? I don’t know. I only know that it works. The process is ongoing. I have asked questions, sought advice, argued, and asked for clarification on numerous occasions. Brother Basil and Joseph have been kind, patient, and understanding. It is my fervent hope that our communication will continue for many years to come.

Here is Brother Basil’s message and Joseph’s Blessing:

200
MESSAGES OF LOVE,
ACCEPTANCE,
AND UNDERSTANDING

Messages of Love, Acceptance, and Understanding

1

Be kind to one another

All of us tend to live in past memory and future anticipation, ignoring the opportunity to be kind in the present moment. There is never a time to be unkind. How can you determine what is “kind” and what is “unkind”? By considering your actions not from your own perspective, but from the recipient’s perspective. Do what you know is morally right in your soul.

“The most important human endeavor is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend upon it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

There have been many occasions where Joseph has been treated unkindly, both deliberately and inadvertently. He is outwardly different in his mannerisms. Comments and physical demands have been directed towards him under the guise of “behavioral therapy”, “special education”, and various professional analysis. Is this appropriate? Yes. Each person should be given the opportunity to fulfill their highest potential. But there is no need to be unkind in word or deed.

Would you shout “walk” to a quadriplegic? Would you become verbally insulting when he does not comply? Physically abusive? The quadriplegic understands that walking is desirable, and he would like to comply with the demand, but he cannot. No amount of bullying or unkindness will change the situation, it will only lead to frustration or an unacceptable response in return. What would be kind? Empathy. Practical assistance. Acceptance. Pleasantness in word and deed.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

2

Forgive one another, and forgive yourself

Forgiveness is easy to say, but hard to do. Who should we forgive? We should forgive ourselves for past mistakes, inconsiderate acts or words, misunderstandings, and either deliberate or inadvertent unkindness. Why? Because we need to forgive ourselves so that we can move forward. We are going to remember the lessons of the past, and not repeat them.

How should we forgive ourselves? Within our own souls. Sincerely, deeply, and with our solemn internal vow to be aware for the future, and do better. Equally important is the act of apology to those we have harmed. As we practice forgiveness towards others, they must be given the opportunity to forgive us. The memory of past wrongs will always remain, but it will fade to shadow in the present light of forgiveness and understanding.

“Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph seems unaware, but he holds hurts in his heart and remembers them, telling himself that the ugly labels and comments are true. He cannot move forward without self-forgiveness, and apology from those who have harmed him. He needs to understand that his past mistakes and misunderstandings are learning experiences to be forgiven, that unkindness and inconsiderate words or actions will not be repeated, and that the future is full of hope.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Messages of Love, Acceptance, and Understanding

3

Have mercy for yourself, and others

Mercy is not the same as forgiveness. If you have mercy, there will be nothing to forgive. Mercy is compassion, pity, benevolence when you have power or control. We have power and control over ourselves, practice mercy. We are all outsiders to each other with varying degrees of power and control, practice mercy.

“All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is often the subject of pity. The pity is well intentioned, he is very different and seemingly dysfunctional. Is it helpful? Pity implies hopelessness, and none of us is without hope. Compassionate benevolence involves tolerance and understanding, and the ability to move forward into the future with those possessing power and control. The ability to be valued.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

4

Watch, and emulate, those with a good heart

How do we know if someone has a good heart? Empathy, which is understanding not necessarily agreement, is a sure sign. How can we gain empathy? By asking the five “W” questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and really listening to the answers. By uncritical observation and thoughtful deduction.

*“If people are good only because they fear punishment,
and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a good heart, not because he fears punishment or desires reward, but because he has a beautiful pure soul. Joseph has empathy. Can any of us adequately answer the five “W” questions? Our answers are dependent upon the unique perspective and opinions of the answerer. Understanding is dependent upon the heart of the listener. Those with a good heart worth emulating understand how to observe, deduce, and listen to the soul. From Joseph’s perspective. From our perspective.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

5

Don't let evil into your soul

Evil creeps in slowly, silently, and unnoticed until it invades the soul. We know when our mind turns to evil, the question is whether or not we ignore it. Self-vigilance and critical thinking enables the expulsion of evil before it takes hold, before justification and self-righteousness convince us that evil is good.

*“Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters
cannot be trusted with important matters.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is an innocent. He knows only truth. He has no evil, no self-righteousness. He has experienced the evil of greed in the guise of purported interventions to “cure” Autism that are potentially harmful and outright bogus. Parents and caregivers become desperate and fall victim to evildoers in righteous disguise. We are all potential prey to evil and lies feeding upon our circumstances and our fears.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

6

Friends are treasures

Friendship flows in both directions. To have a friend, you must also be a friend. Visualize each of your friends, and think about their role in your life, and your role in their life. Each relationship is a different blessing.

*“Why is it that nobody understands
me, yet everybody likes me?”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has many friends, many of whom he has never physically met, and some who don't understand him. Everybody likes Joseph. He and Brother Basil visualize and discuss each friend (often with a Facebook photo) and vicariously enter their lives. Each friend is loved and cherished. All of them are spiritual leaders, aunties and uncles, protectors of body and soul, and beloved friends. Our friends are our support system, and each of them is a treasure beyond value. Thank you to each of you, you bless our lives.

“Joseph's Blessing”

7

Life is a gift, don't take it for granted

As friends are an immeasurable gift who enhance our lives, life itself is a gift too. Transitory, fleeting, and constantly evolving. A gift to be accepted graciously and appreciated even if the contents are not something we wanted, expected, or hoped for.

*“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking.
It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's life is an immeasurable gift. On the surface, his life “contents” are not exactly something wanted, expected, or hoped for. On the surface, his life is something needing change. But the gift is to the recipient, not the observer. Is Joseph happy with his gift? He has Madelyn, and Brother Basil, and me, in addition to extended family and friends on both sides of the veil. He laughs frequently and finds pleasure in unexpected ways. Joseph loves unconditionally, and is loved unconditionally in return. Life is a great gift.

“Joseph's Blessing”

8

Life involves change

Life involves change, whether we welcome it or not. Change is difficult. For everyone.

“The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is at all comprehensible.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

When Joseph’s grandmother died suddenly it was devastating, incomprehensible. She was our strongest and most beloved support system. Joseph’s most empathetic advocate, and our best friend. She understood, always. And she was gone. It was a very dark time of change, and ultimately a time of unexpected revelation. In desperation, I reached out to her on the other side in a way that I hadn’t attempted since early childhood. Reached out with faith. Reached out with hope. Reached out with love. And she answered. She guides, and protects. Gratitude beyond words.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

9

Love unconditionally

I will love you if ... you change. Change how, precisely? Will there be additional conditions as the relationship progresses? When will change end and perfection be achieved? Never. Perfection is not a human trait, and those who judge the perfection of others will never be satisfied or happy. There is no ethical basis upon which to judge. Love unconditionally.

“I have never looked upon ease and happiness as ends in themselves - such an ethical basis I call more proper for a herd of swine.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph loves unconditionally. He would naturally prefer that everyone immediately love him unconditionally too, but he will continue to love and strive to earn reciprocity. Joseph will try to change although he doesn't understand the instructions. Try to change even though the requirements are unreasonable. Try to meet the conditions for that which should be unconditional. Try to accommodate those who can never be satisfied. Try to accommodate those with shifting conditions. Unconditional love deserves unconditional love in return. Nothing else is required. Nothing else is acceptable.

“Joseph's Blessing”

10

Everyone has blind spots, be aware of them

What are “blind spots”? Situations that we refuse to see. Situations that we refuse to acknowledge even though they impact our lives. Situations that provoke fear and haunt our soul. Friends, family, members of our support system will often emphatically point to our blind spots and insist that we acknowledge our shortcomings. Yes, we should know and acknowledge our blind spots. Blind spots are a coping mechanism, but are they always undesirable?

“The search for truth is more precious than its possession.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a blind spot involving the death of his grandmother because although she is no longer physically present, he interacts with her regularly. I have a blind spot about Joseph because I think that he’s differently perfect. Both of us have a blind spot about communication with Brother Basil, because our relationship seems easy and natural. Awareness is important, outsider judgment is not.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

11

Be aware of your words, choose each one wisely

Some people speak without thought, without pause, without having something worthwhile to say. They never listen. Never gauge reaction. Never tire of the sound of their own voice.

“We all know that light travels faster than sound. That’s why certain people appear bright until you hear them speak.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is much brighter than he appears to be. He never speaks with his mouth. He speaks with his thoughts. He speaks with his eyes. He speaks with his body language. He speaks with his reaction to the speaker. Every physical reaction is immediate. Every thought is carefully chosen. He looks like he’s not listening, but Joseph listens to everything. He looks like he’s not thinking, but Joseph thinks about everything. Many of us are more than we appear to be.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

12

Help those who need help

How do we know if someone needs help? Perhaps more importantly, how do we know if someone wants help? These are not the same questions. Often, we perceive that someone we care about needs help, but they refuse to accept our help. Why? Perhaps the problem is with the offer, and not with the intended recipient. Was the offer judgmental, and not made from a place of love and acceptance? Offers of help need reasonably workable options allowing the recipient to retain control over their lives. Threats and deadlines are never reasonably workable options. The equivalent of: “Get yourself together by this date or I’m going to give up on you!!” How would you feel if someone gave you this ultimatum? Would you graciously accept their help?

“Everyone should be respected as an individual.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Well intentioned people are constantly attempting to help Joseph change into ... not Joseph. He obviously needs help in daily tasks such as eating. Help which he graciously accepts while pleasantly interacting with his helper. Joseph loves eating, and he is very social (after he connects with his new helper’s soul, determining their personality and motives). From a functional standpoint, he would like to be more capable, and he graciously accepts, and attempts to comply with, reasonably workable offers of help. The question always remains: “Is it reasonably workable?”

“Joseph’s Blessing”

13

Have positive anger, for action, not revenge

Everyone has moments of anger. Anger at individuals, at workplaces, at governments, the world in general. The question is: “What do we do with that anger?” Do we privately internalize, causing stress and dysfunctional personality traits? Do we publicly lash out in an ineffective and negative manner? Instead, seek constructive change, constructive dialogue. Positive change cannot be the result of negative anger, and revenge is always negative.

“The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don’t do anything about it.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has the capacity for love, but he lacks the capacity for anger, it’s one of his finest qualities. Joseph does feel deeply hurt when someone takes advantage of him and betrays his trusting nature. He never forgets, but he does forgive and allows the transgressor the opportunity for redemption. As Joseph’s mother, I have sought and achieved revenge on those who attempt to harm Joseph. I have learned, with Brother Basil’s guidance, to instead seek positive action so that the situation never happens again (which is substantially more effective, and satisfying, than revenge). Although, I confess that after careful consideration and consultation with Madelyn, Brother Basil, and Joseph, I still aggressively revenge particularly egregious situations (and that’s satisfying too)!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

14

Hope seeds each new day

Without hope, there is no future. All people need something positive to look forward to. Even if the situation is dire, even if there is justifiable anger, there is always hope that instead of revenge there will be positive action and reasonably workable help. Where will this action and help come from? They may ultimately come from outside sources, but they must be initiated by you. You are the source of your hope. You are the source of your future. Make time to have hope.

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph always has hope. Brother Basil always has hope. Hope in the goodness of the human spirit. Hope that each new day will bring greater empathy and understanding. Hope that we will all fulfill our greatest potential and destiny.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

15

Tell the truth, when you lie to others, you lie to yourself

We all lie to ourselves (I have convinced myself that I look younger than my biological age.) We all lie to others to be complimentary and kind to sensitive egos. Brother Basil is talking about lies of justification. Lies to ourselves, and to others, where we internalize and seek to justify something that we know in our soul is wrong. Seeking to justify that which cannot be justified, and fearing exposure of the truth. It starts with small justifications, small untruths, and gradually evolves. Gradually grows. Gradually consumes the soul.

“Anyone who doesn’t take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph cannot lie. He doesn’t perpetrate or understand deceit. He also doesn’t understand verbal humor or sarcasm. Joseph understands all spoken word as literal truth. He can touch the soul and gain understanding of a person’s nature and the goodness of their soul. What he doesn’t understand is why some people possess deceitful natures and blemished souls.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

16

Speak your truth

Speaking the truth is not the same as telling the truth. Telling the truth, to yourself and others, is personal. Speaking the truth is a public action in an attempt to correct injustice and make the world a better and more hopeful place. Brother Basil cautions us to remember that your truth may not be the same as someone else's truth. Opinions may differ, the goal is empathy which is understanding, not necessarily agreement. With empathy, the truth can be spoken with one voice.

“Morality is of the highest importance - but for us, not for God.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph and Brother Basil always speak the moral truth. The challenge is for us to speak this truth on their behalf. The challenge is to clearly convey their message so that it is understood, and moral truth spoken by others with a unified voice.

“Joseph's Blessing”

17

Don't be a victim, or victimize others

Do you see yourself as a victim? Me too. In the past, but not now. Brother Basil warns against negative self-image. Victims feel helpless, and without hope. Victims become victimized because evil seeks them out, and takes advantage of their weakness. “Victim” should never be an internalized label that we give ourselves. “Victim” should never be an externalized label that we give to others within our control.

*“Be creative, but be sure that what you
create is not a curse for mankind.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“Victim” is a label assigned to those deemed inferior, weak, unable to fend for themselves. Cursed and taken advantage of by those deemed “strong”. Is Joseph a victim of Autism? No. Joseph is certainly different and functionally challenged but he doesn't have a victim mindset. Joseph looks forward to each new day with love and acceptance.

“Joseph's Blessing”

18

Fight with determination

Instead of being a victim, be a fighter. Fight for justice, and peace, and self-determination. Fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. Fight on a global scale, but first fight on a personal level. Make yourself into the leader you want to follow.

“You never fail until you stop trying.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph fights with determination every day. He fights for understanding, and to be understood. He fights to accommodate the desires of those around him to the best of his abilities. He fights to reach, and heal, the soul.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

19

Focus on your goal

In order to have a goal, you must first define it, and then focus. What does Brother Basil mean by “define”? If a goal is too broad (improve my life) it becomes meaningless because it’s too general to be reasonably achieved without a more specific plan. Break the goal down into steps that are reasonably doable, do them, and then move onto the next step. Step-by-step your life will improve.

*“If you want to live a happy life, tie it to
a goal, not to people or things.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph thinks about each step, learned in sequence, before he can accomplish a functional goal that most people regard as a single step. For example, to eat with a spoon is a series of complex steps. He must: grasp the spoon, hold it so that the bowl is upright, place the spoon in food, keep the spoon steady on the way to his mouth, open his mouth and place the spoon inside, close his mouth around the spoon, extract the food, pull the spoon out of his mouth, and start the entire procedure again for the next bite. Functional goals are complicated!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

20

Remember the past, but not in bondage

*“Those who cannot remember the past
are condemned to repeat it”.*

GEORGE SANTAYANA

Brother Basil teaches us to forgive and move forward, but we are not instructed to forget. Remember, but do not dwell upon, unpleasant past experiences so that they can be avoided in the future. Remember, but do not dwell upon, pleasant past experiences so that they can be a foundation for the future. The past educates, but doesn't hold in bondage, the future.

Joseph remembers everything, perhaps too well. He worries about the opinions of others about him. Joseph dwells upon the negative comments and unfavorable assessments pronounced by people lacking in empathy and understanding. Joseph is so sensitive that I have developed a rule for everyone who interacts with him: “If you're going to say something uncomplimentary about Joseph, don't say it where he can hear it.”

“Joseph's Blessing”

21

There is no normal life, there's just life

What is “normal”? There is no simple answer because “normal” is defined by personal opinion and societal norms. What is “normal” to me may be outlandish to you.

*“There is far too great a disproportion between
what one is and what others think one is, or at
least what they say they think one is.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Is Joseph “normal”? Does anyone think he’s “normal”, including Joseph’s personal opinion about himself? No. He is not-normally functional, but also not-normally sensitive and not-normally empathetic. Joseph is extraordinary!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

22

Stop complaining

Brother Basil refuses to acknowledge complaints. He regards complaints as unfocused and useless unless they become goals with specific plans for improvement. Complaining is annoying to the listener, and damaging when it becomes internalized self-dialogue. What's the point? Instead of complaining, keep looking for a solution. Keep moving forward instead of stagnating in dissatisfied self-pity.

“I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph never complains, even when he should. For example, he doesn't mention a tummy ache, he just refuses to eat because he doesn't want to be nauseous, even if it's his favorite food. He never complains about anyone, even if they've been unkind. Joseph never complains about having Autism, that's just the way he is.

“Joseph's Blessing”

23

Accept what cannot be changed

Every morning, I pray the Serenity Prayer with Joseph as a meditation to focus both thoughts and actions:

“God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

How can we acquire the “wisdom to know the difference”? Wisdom is attained through experience and the teachings of others who have also gained their own wisdom through experience. Brother Basil, Joseph’s grandmother, and all those we connect with add to our cache of experience. They teach us so that we may teach others, and hopefully gain acceptance, courage, and wisdom.

Joseph intuitively understands the Serenity Prayer. He has the wisdom to accept that the challenges of Autism are part of his life, and the courage to do his very best everyday.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

24

Acknowledge fear, and refuse to be paralyzed

Present fear deals with the unknown future. Past fear deals with memories that are frightening to recall but can no longer harm us (except psychologically, if we let them). Even Brother Basil cannot predict the details of the future, there are too many variables. Fear makes us cautious. Fear makes us plan for possible future situations. Fear can become debilitating if we allow it to consume our thoughts, consume our lives, consume our future. Often, what we ultimately fear is death.

“The fear of death is the most unjustified of all fears, for there’s no risk of accident for someone who’s dead.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Acknowledge fear in a positive, proactive manner, and then let go before becoming paralyzed.

Joseph has no fear. He knows that he is safe, comfortable, and unconditionally loved. He doesn’t need to have fear, because the Spirit world and his functional friends in this world will protect him, no matter what happens.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

25

Things change, it's a good thing

Change happens, and even if we haven't caused it, we can't stop it. Even if we have caused the change, sometimes there are unintended consequences. Brother Basil uses the American idiomatic phrase "It is what it is" when dealing with change. Accept what has changed as a positive event, an opportunity, a learning experience, and a challenge for future change.

"The more a man (person) is imbued with the ordered regularity of all events the firmer becomes his convictions that there is no room left by the side of this ordered regularity for cause of a different nature."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is not fond of change in his daily life. He enjoys the predictability of routine and values time for quiet contemplation. He doesn't want to go out and experience the world and its bewildering unpredictability, its noise and chaos, the disapproval of strangers. He loves meeting people and having new experiences within a more controlled environment, an environment where he can focus without disruption to his Autistic hyper-sensitivities.

"Joseph's Blessing"

26

Be the inspiration

What type of inspiration? Positive to be emulated, or negative to be avoided as a bad example? Brother Basil deems both types of inspiration to be equally important. Positive inspirations are wonderful, but often difficult to emulate. Negative inspirations are much more approachable, subject to intense scrutiny, and easier to understand as examples of “what not to do”.

“A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I received and am still receiving”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Brother Basil and the Spirit world are positive inspirations for us and for Joseph, teaching love and acceptance.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

27

*Exchange ideas even
if you disagree*

Ideas influence the future and give purpose to past experiences. Disagreement is healthy and productive. Discussion, analysis, argument, and ultimately consensus results from an exchange of ideas. Imagination and fantasy about a brighter future are the building blocks of ideas that create the foundation for change. Nothing was ever accomplished or invented without first being an idea that was exchanged, disagreed with, modified and acted upon.

*“The gift of fantasy has meant more to me than
my talent for absorbing positive knowledge.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has many ideas that he contemplates slowly and carefully before disclosing. If his idea is unacceptable to his adults, he will rethink it and try again.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

28

Take action

*“What is right is not always popular and
what is popular is not always right.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

What is “right”? When should we take action? Brother Basil uses a moral compass defined by a series of questions: Does it benefit those in need? Is the goal well defined, truthful, honest and primarily altruistic? Is the action in direct response to a “wrong”? Who has judged it “wrong”, and why? Have the action consequences been carefully considered? Is there a follow up plan for future action?

There are many wonderful people who take action to make the world of Autism understood, accepted and assisted. Worldwide there are organizations, communities and individuals taking action to raise awareness, disseminate information, and fund research. Joseph, and his Autistic brethren greatly benefit from their actions, and we are immensely grateful.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

29

*If you learn, it's no
longer a mistake*

*“If we knew what it was we were doing, it
would not be called research, would it?”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Mistakes are excellent learning experiences to be analyzed, discussed in an exchange of ideas, and reported to provide future inspiration for success. Making mistakes is an integral part of taking action. If you never make a mistake, always play it safe, and never take action, you will never effectuate change for the better.

Joseph is timid about making mistakes and needs continuous encouragement to learn and try new things. He worries about the opinions and reactions of those around him. Instead of labeling an attempt “wrong” or a “mistake”, he needs to be shown a “different” way for the next time.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

30

Never be too busy to enjoy the moment

Brother Basil tells me this all the time. I get so involved in life's challenges that I forget to enjoy life's moments. Do you do this too? Take a break by shutting your eyes and concentrate on slow, meditative breathing. Get up from your work and have a snack. Take a walk. Communicate with a friend. Make time to do something you enjoy.

"I never think of the future - it comes soon enough."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is never too busy, and always willing to enjoy a snack, music, non-judgmental social interaction and shared communication. My best moments are enjoyed with him!

"Joseph's Blessing"

31

You don't need to be perfect, you just need to care

Nobody's perfect. People who claim perfection are narcissistic, imperfect, and extremely annoying. They lack compassion, empathy, and all desirable human traits. Brother Basil says that the acknowledgement of personal imperfection combined with compassion and empathy for other imperfect humans is perfection.

“A human being is part of a whole, called by us “universe”, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest ... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph worries about the fact that he isn't perfect because from his functional perspective everyone else seems so much more capable. So much more perfect. Sometimes he refuses to try a new task not because he is physically incapable, but because he's not certain he can get it “right” on the first try. Perfection is limiting.

“Joseph's Blessing”

32

Make time for those important to you, no excuses

Who is important to you? Now that you have named them, communicate with them immediately, before you forget, before you get too busy. Why are they important? Tell them. Schedule frequent communication with the important people. Put it on your calendar as an appointment. Let them know about their appointment so that they're available because you are as important to them as they are to you.

“Solitude can be tolerated only up to a certain limit, you know.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

There are many important people in our lives, both Spirit and living. We love you all, but Joseph is my most important, and I am his most important. We communicate constantly, no appointment necessary.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

33

Appreciate differences

Difference is good, and not-so-good, and ... different. We are all different from each other, that's what makes us interesting, and unique, and individually human.

“Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is different, and he knows it. Does being Autistic bother him? Certainly, the functional inabilities are personally bothersome, but he is unique, and interesting, and individually human in his empathic abilities. Difference is not necessarily bad, it's just ... different.

“Joseph's Blessing”

34

Take chances with no regrets

Especially take chances on other people. Forgive past transgressions and give someone a second chance to make things right. Take chances to help someone, especially if they cannot possibly return the favor. Take chances to do the right thing, and have no regrets if it doesn't turn out as expected or hoped for. Take chances to effectuate change, in yourself and others.

“The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has no regrets because he never holds a grudge. He's always willing to give as many chances as needed, and needs the same courtesy extended to him because sometimes misunderstandings occur, and nobody's perfect.

“Joseph's Blessing”

35

Time passes quickly, do it now

“How strange is the lot of us mortals! Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he knows not, though he sometimes thinks he senses it.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Time is our most precious, and uncertain, possession. The only certainty is that time will end, without our permission and too soon. Even Brother Basil cannot foretell the specific timeline of our existence. If it's important, do it now. If it's trivial, do it now because it may lead to something important. If it gives you joy, do it now and often.

Joseph is in time, but he has no concept of the time. What does this mean? Joseph spends time meditating, thinking, and relaxing. He has no timetable, no assignments, no stress to make an agenda or plan for the future. For Joseph, time passes at exactly the correct pace, it just is.

“Joseph's Blessing”

36

Alleviate Suffering

What type of suffering? Physical? Emotional? Who is suffering, and how can we help? Whenever we encounter suffering, of any type, we should do everything in our power to alleviate it. What is the primary type of suffering that we should seek out and alleviate? Our own suffering. Seek and confront the source of your suffering. Ask yourself the five “W” questions to gain empathy for yourself, and understanding about the source of your suffering: “who?”; “what?”; “where?”; “when?”; “why?”. Answer these five questions truthfully to alleviate your own suffering, and then you will be capable of helping others.

“A man’s (person’s) ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph doesn’t suffer. He leads a quiet, happy life where all of his needs and desires are accommodated. But he understands, and empathizes with, the suffering of people around him. Joseph will intently scrutinize the face of the sufferer, and reach over to touch their soul with comfort. He asks no questions, he accepts the unhappiness, and offers unconditional empathy by his presence.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

37

Never give up, there's always hope

If you give up, there is no hope. Life is full of challenges, some substantially more difficult than others. Some challenges seem hopeless at the present time, but there is always hope for the future. Step back. Hang on. The future is coming. There is always hope.

“Where there’s a will there’s a way.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has been deemed “hopeless” many times. By Autism professionals, by medical professionals, by therapists, and by boorish strangers. He has NEVER been deemed hopeless by his Grandmother, by anyone who has taken the time to know him and be touched by his soul, or by me. Most importantly, Joseph has never deemed himself hopeless. Brother Basil loves Joseph because of his strength and hope. Different? Yes. Functionally unable? Yes. Physically nonverbal? Yes. Hopeless? Absolutely not!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

38

Love never falters, never lets you go

This is not romantic love or physical attraction. These things fade quickly and are unreliable. The type of love that never falters, never lets go, is deeper. Deeper to the soul. Deeper to empathy. Deeper to understanding. This love might be family. This love might be friends. This love might be a partner. In order to experience this love, you must seek it. In order to have this love, you must give it. In order to give this love, you must have it within yourself.

“One must take what nature gives as one finds it.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is greatly loved, and loves greatly in return. Would anyone have chosen the attributes of Autism? No, but they are a part of Joseph. If love is conditional (I love you, but ...), then it's not the kind of love that never falters, never lets go. Love should be unconditional. Joseph is unconditionally loved, and loves unconditionally.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

39

Small realistic goals lead to big unrealistic success

What differentiates “realistic goals” from “unrealistic”? Taking action to realize the goals and their successful outcome. Define “success” to define the goal. If the goal is too big, divide it into a manageable, logical step-by-step progression. Seek assistance. Be flexible. Be gracious. Celebrate each success.

“The ideals which have lighted me on my way and time after time given me new courage to face life cheerfully have been Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Communication with Joseph was the goal. Experts defined this goal as “unrealistic”, but we persisted in taking action. Verbal communication was unlikely, so we defined success as communication in any possible manner. Tried sign language. Tried PECS (system of pictures to indicate needs). Tried Autism specific communication programs. Tried facilitated communication (assisted handwriting). Tried every augmented communication device and computer program available. We tried all of them without success. Slowly, I realized that I “knew” what Joseph wanted, what he was thinking. I tried listening, not to voiced words, but to his soul. Soul-to-soul. Mind-to-mind. Success!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

40

Depression is living in the past

“The best way to cheer yourself is to cheer somebody else up.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Depression is remembering the past, and envisioning an uncertain future. When my Mother (Joseph’s beloved grandmother) died suddenly, I was extremely depressed and traumatized. I couldn’t just wallow in grief, I had responsibilities and obligations, but I needed a safe place to weep. To mourn. To be vulnerable and express my depression over losing one of the two most important people in my life. I sought God. People in the Church that I was a member of were unsympathetic to my depression, setting an “appropriate” time period for mourning. I joined a different Church. Same Christian faith, true Christian attitude. I sat in the back at Sunday services and wept uncontrollably. Strangers, now friends, offered assistance and sympathy. Having a safe place helped immeasurably. They saved me, and I am truly grateful. As I was helped, I now help others, always vigilant for those in need of understanding and assistance. Helping others “cheers” the soul.

I would have become paralyzed, but Joseph needed me. And I needed Joseph. I still take my depression, fears, anxiety about the future, and problems to Church on Sunday to talk with God. Both Joseph and I are very blessed to have Brother Basil, Madelyn, and the other Spirits every day.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

41

Have sincere faith

Faith is not synonymous with traditional organized religious belief and ritual. Brother Basil still loves his Church community with its traditional Christian foundation, but “faith” resides in the soul of the individual and not within religious dogma or edifices. Faith is deep, personal, sacred.

“That deep emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has truly sincere faith. Not faith in ritual, or a specifically proselytized named faith. He has faith in the Human Spirit and in the goodness of others.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

42

Make peace with the present

Remember the past. Plan for the future. Live in peace with the present. My Mother says that: “The past is gone. The future is unknown. Today is a gift, that’s why it’s called the present.” She is very wise and always lived with integrity while being fully present.

“I believe that a simple and unassuming manner of life is best for everyone, best both for the body and the mind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph remembers the past and thinks about the future in the abstract, but he is always fully present, and at peace. He looks forward to, and accepts, each day as it unfolds.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

43

No family is perfect, but family is family

No person is perfect, including each of us. Family is people, so no family is perfect, but some families are closer to perfect than others. Family can be blood, but not necessarily. Friends are the family that we choose, so choose carefully and be worthy of being chosen. Look to the soul, and not to extrinsic characteristics or materialistic benefits.

“People like you and me never grow old. We never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a hypersensitive “sixth sense” about people. He doesn’t care what they look like or who they are. He knows immediately if a new person will qualify as “family”, or not.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

44

*Anxiousness is
living in the future*

Just as depression is living in the past, anxiousness is living in fear of the future. Fear of the unknown. Fear of plans that seem good today, but circumstances may change in the future. Fear about future situations over which we have no present-day control. Future plans are important, but they can only be made using present day information. Do the best you can, then let go of anxiousness. Be flexible for the future and keep track of new developments, then let go of anxiousness. Anxiousness is counter-productive. Let go.

“I do not at all believe in human freedom in the philosophical sense. Everybody acts not only under external compulsion but also in accordance with inner necessity.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph becomes anxious, especially when confronted with new or unexpected situations. He assesses the situation, lets go of his anxiousness when prompted, and does the best he can with the abilities he has.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

45

Don't wait for happiness

What is happiness? Is it accomplishing goals? Is it being in a specific place, with specific people? Is it an overall feeling of well-being? The answer is: “All of the above.” Waiting for happiness is like waiting for success to magically happen, both require conscious effort and action. Happiness is personal. Think about what makes you happy, and do it. Frequently.

“The satisfaction of physical needs is indeed the indispensable precondition of a satisfactory existence, but in itself is not enough. In order to be content, men (people) must also have the possibility of developing their intellectual and artistic powers to whatever extent accords with their personal characteristics and abilities.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is happy, and he seeks happiness in others. He is both hyper-sensitive and hyper-empathetic to negative emotions causing unhappiness. Joseph will reach out to calm the afflicted soul, and he will also physically attempt to induce a happier state of mind through laughter.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

46

Happiness is recognizing your gifts

Everyone has special gifts. Special abilities. Special talents that add to human completeness. Realization of our own gifts, and acknowledgement by others who recognize our talents, makes each gift, each talent, each wonderful ability bloom.

“Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is so differently abled that he appears to be ungifted, but he has many gifts. Empathetic. Happy. Good natured. Always seeing the good in others, and graciously recognizing their gifts, talents, and abilities.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

47

No matter how you feel, keep going

Nobody feels good all the time. Physically. Emotionally. General malaise. Should we give up? Will giving up make us feel better? Absolutely not. Giving up admits defeat, find another way. Giving up leads to failure, strive for success. The path to success is often an uphill climb, take it slow and steady, and never give up.

“Human beings can attain a worthy and harmonious life only if they are able to rid themselves, within the limits of human nature, of striving to fulfill wishes of the material kind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph never gives up, and he has no interest in physical possessions. Everyday, he wakes up with a myriad of functional challenges. Everyday, he keeps going and does the very best he can.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

48

Be whoever you are

Make whoever you are worth being. Be a person worth knowing. Care for yourself, and others. Have empathy and understanding. Be kind. Have moral standards embracing everyone without thought of personal benefit. Be a credit to the human race.

“Look around at how people want to get more out of life than they put in. A man (person) of value will give more than he receives.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is who he is. Does Autism make him a person not worth being? Does his life have value? Brother Basil and the Spirits communicate with Joseph because Joseph is worth knowing, of value, and a credit to the human race.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

49

You don't have to do what everybody else is doing

Sometimes, what everybody else is doing is stupid. Following is easy. Following is acceptable. Following is inside the “comfort zone” (how-it-has-always-been-done). Following discourages independent thought. Discourages new ideas. Discourages action. Sometimes, following is wrong. Think independently. Think outside the “comfort zone”. Think of new ways, new ideas, for improvement. Think, and take action.

“Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not certain about the universe.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is frequently instructed to follow. Follow therapist instructions to repeat meaningless sounds and perform repetitive tasks with no practical purpose. Follow functional instructions that are physically impossible. Follow a general therapy template without new ideas for individualized modification. Follow assumptions about Autistic humans. Follow stupidly. Joseph doesn't follow stupidity because Joseph isn't stupid.

“Joseph's Blessing”

50

Consciously be wherever you are

Where are you? Physically. Emotionally. As a person in relation to other people? These questions can be considered and answered in the present, but not in the future or the past. Why? Because you are not in the future or the past, you are conscious now. Be conscious of your reactions. Reactions to surroundings, other people, your own thoughts. Stop and listen to the external environment around you, and to the internal environment inside you. View both environments with positive consciousness.

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is always conscious. Often hyper-conscious to his external environment due to sound, touch and environmental disturbance sensitivities. When his external environment becomes overwhelming, Joseph retreats into the comfort of his internal environment.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

51

*Grow as a person and
become your best self*

What is your “best self”? You need to define “best self” before you can grow into it. How do you define it? By the conscious, deliberate decision to improve your present situation, and grow into the future.

*“Few are those who see with their own eyes
and feel with their own hearts.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph constantly strives to be his “best self”. How does he define it? By growing to be the best possible person that he can be. By striving to accommodate the expectations of others. By being conscious of Brother Basil’s spiritual blessing.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

52

Some things just take time

Some things take lots of time, and effort. Be patient. Time is wasted on false paths. Keep seeking the correct path. Unsuccessful time-consuming actions. No actions are unsuccessful, they are stepping stones to success. Mistakes have been made. Mistakes are learning experiences. Running out of time. The time of revelation is not yet here. We are patient. We never give up.

“Only if outward and inner freedom are constantly and consciously pursued is there a possibility of spiritual development and perfection and thus of improving man’s outward and inner life.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is patient and tolerant of others. For Joseph’s entire life we have searched for ways to alleviate the symptoms of Autism. Not cure, because Autism isn’t a disease. Ways to alleviate the hyper-sensitivities, the functional deficits, the self-injurious behavior. Ways to alleviate being stared at by normally functioning people with pity and dismay. Searching for ways to appear more “normal”. Some things just take time. Be patient. Never give up.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

53

Silence is not ignorance

The most valuable type of silence occurs when listening. Listening with an open mind. Listening with understanding, not necessarily agreement. Listening with conscious concentration. Listening and thinking. Listening and thinking before speaking. Speaking with reasoned, gracious civility. Speaking with truth. Listening and speaking with compassion.

“The only thing I did was this: in long intervals I have expressed an opinion on public issues whenever they appeared to me so bad and unfortunate that silence would have made me feel guilty of complicity.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is not silent. He verbalizes, but he doesn't physically speak in intelligible words. This functional inability does not indicate ignorance. Joseph is listening. Brother Basil is listening and speaking. Speaking with reasoned, gracious civility. Speaking truth with compassion.

“Joseph's Blessing”

54

*Celebrate the small things
and the big things will come*

Celebrate every success. Every step forward. Humans see the difficult path in front of them, and forget how far they've already come. Celebration joyously marks each step, and helps us to remember our progress. Celebration keeps motivation alive with pleasant expectation. Work to accumulate enough small celebrations, and the big celebration will come.

“The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph doesn't see a difficult path because he celebrates the accomplishments of each day without looking further. Every day is another step forward.

“Joseph's Blessing”

55

Calmness comes from strength, not acceptance

Hysteria is acceptance of an undesirable outcome, and the resulting panic response. Calmness when faced with adversity is a rational response. Calmness is listening. Calmness is thinking. Calmness is working on a solution from a position of strength. Calmness never accepts the outcome as inevitable. Calmness has the strength of character to move forward when others refuse. Calmness has the strength to initiate change.

“Only one who devotes himself to a cause with his (her) whole strength and soul can be a true master. For this reason mastery demands all of a person.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph tries to always be calm. What purpose does panic serve? None, it is counter-productive and prevents rational response. Even when the initial visceral response is panic, we force ourselves to breathe, center our thoughts, check our reactions, and seek a practical solution. Calmness when faced with adversity is a deliberate act.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

56

Acknowledge the burdens of the past, and move on

The past is part of our journey, part of who we are, but it cannot consume our lives. Cannot consume our present. Cannot consume our future. Past burdens, mistakes, and hurts are memories to be remembered and learned from. Remembered and not repeated. Remembered but not dwelt upon. The past is in the past, move on.

*“I salute the man (person) who is going through
life always helpful, knowing no fear, and to whom
aggressiveness and resentment are alien.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph remembers everything. The good memories along with the insults, bullying, unkind words and unkind deeds. He remembers, and forgives, and moves on. He has no fear, no aggression, no resentment. Joseph remembers, and forgives, and moves on even with those who have harmed him in the past, graciously accepting each encounter as a new chance to make a better present and future.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Kindness is not weakness

Always be kind, even if others criticize your actions as weakness. Those who criticize kindness, and seek only strength and power, are themselves weak in character. Beware. They are not good associates and will cause harm. Disassociate yourself from them.

“Compassionate people are geniuses in the art of living, more necessary to the dignity, security, and joy of humanity than the discoverers of knowledge.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has great kindness and strength of character. He seeks kindness in others. Brother Basil has great kindness, strength of character, and patience. He seeks to teach kindness to others.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

58

Be with people who make you happy

Do the people you are with make you unhappy? Consider. Are you contributing to the source of unhappiness? Change your attitude. Change your perception. Be a source of happiness. Change the situation. Change your happiness.

*“Live with purpose. Don’t let people or
things around you get you down.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Being with Joseph makes me happy. This wasn’t always true. Before I understood that he was a source of joy and happiness, I perceived him as an Autistic problem. A burden to be “fixed”. Not an Angel Spirit worthy of great value. Having him as my son made me unhappy. His Grandmother always loved him unconditionally, but she understood my unhappiness. My attitude. My perception. My negative contribution to my own unhappiness, and to the unhappiness of those around me, including Joseph. She helped me change, and continues to help us navigate our daily lives. Change attitude. Change perception. Change to happiness. Joseph makes me happy.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

59

*No matter how bad things
seem, something good
will come from it*

Bad things happen. To everyone. How do we decide that something, some experience, is “bad”? The determining factors are present knowledge (at the time) and past experience. The future is unknown. Future perception, future memory of the present “bad” experience, may alter our understanding. We will see the “something good” that came from it.

*“Ethical axioms are found and tested not very
differently from the axioms of science. Truth
is what stands the test of experience.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Autism seems bad. Autism is bad, it’s much easier to be “normal”. But much “good” has come from Joseph’s Autism. Without the empathic hypersensitivity of Autism, this book would not exist. Without the empathic hypersensitivity of Autism, the relationship with Brother Basil and those on the other side would not exist. Without Autism, Joseph would not be Joseph. No matter how bad things seem, something good will come from it.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

60

Smiling makes everyone feel better

Why not smile? Being gracious and pleasant takes little effort and reaps great reward. People positively respond to a positive attitude. There's an old adage: "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar". A sincere smile works wonders in any relationship.

"I believe, indeed, that overemphasis on the purely intellectual attitude, often directed solely to the practical and factual, in our education, has led directly to the impairment of ethical values."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph loves to smile. He smiles at other people, in the hope of a smile in return. He smiles to make himself a source of happiness. He smiles to communicate his love, friendship, and empathy for others. Joseph smiles because smiles become laughter. Laughter is contagious and spreads happiness. Joseph's smiling makes everyone feel better.

"Joseph's Blessing"

61

Hold it together when everyone else thinks you should give up

If it's important, never give up. Re-group. Re-think. Try another path. Enlist the aid of others. Divide the goal into a series of steps, each one to be achieved, celebrated, and move forward. Step-by-step, two steps forward, sometimes one step back. Keep going. Those who urge defeat are themselves defeated and bitter in their mediocrity.

“Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph never gives up. On anyone. On himself. Everyday he improves. Step-by-step. All of the Autism experts think we should give up. Give up on physical functionality. Give up on calming external hyper-sensitivity (we haven't bothered to tell them about empathic hyper-sensitivity). Step-by-step, two steps forward, sometimes one step back. Holding it together. Never give up.

“Joseph's Blessing”

62

Never tell yourself a failure story

What you tell yourself is important and influential. You care what you think. Don't think that you're a failure. Don't make a "failure story" your internal narrative. Your self-fulfilling prophesy. Your future. Speak to yourself as you would wish to be spoken to. With encouragement. With gracious understanding. With respect. Be your own cheerleader and strive for success.

"I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph doesn't have an internalized "failure story" because he has a positive self-image. He doesn't always succeed, but he always tries his very best. Joseph communicates equally, and graciously, with anyone who is interested in communicating with him, as does Brother Basil.

"Joseph's Blessing"

63

Take responsibility for success

You should take responsibility for success. But do you? Are you more likely to take responsibility for failure, even if it wasn't completely your fault? Acknowledge both success (and failure if your responsibility) graciously. Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Take responsibility with dignity and determination for the future. Give yourself inward freedom and take responsibility for the successful result.

“The development of science and of the creative activities of the spirit in general requires still another kind of freedom, which may be characterized as inward freedom. It is this freedom of the spirit which consists in the independence of thought from the restrictions of authoritarian and social prejudices as well as from unphilosophical routinizing and habit in general.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph doesn't need to take responsibility because he has inward freedom and is unconcerned with accolades. Freedom of Spirit. Freedom from having social prejudice, although he has been subjected to prejudice directed at his “disability”. Freedom from self-doubt and internalized disrespect.

“Joseph's Blessing”

64

See the good in people

Everyone has good traits, and bad. How can we determine the difference? It depends upon the situation. Upon actions. Upon decisions and consequences. Upon intent. Upon the perspective of the judge.

“One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”

ANONYMOUS

Joseph only sees the good in people. He is always surprised, and disappointed, when he is treated badly. Disrespectfully. Bullied. I intervene and stop the situation. Immediately. Vehemently. Joseph is still surprised, disappointed, and psychologically harmed. Harmed because he thinks that the bad behavior of others towards him is his fault. Harmed because Joseph is good, and sensitive.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

65

*Repeating excellence
becomes a habit*

Excellence is an example to be emulated, repeatedly, so that it becomes a habit for achievement. Not a stagnant exact copy, but a way of thinking, acting, and progressing forward for betterment. Excellence is leading by example. Excellence is a conscious choice.

*“Setting an example is not the main means of
influencing another, it is the only means.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is an excellent example of unexpected empathy. An example of striving for betterment in the face of adversity. An example of the value of the human and Angel spirit.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

66

Everything happens for a reason

What is the reason for your life? Do you merely exist, or do you strive to make this world a better place? Life experiences shape every individual. Every individual contributes to the cumulative experience. Every individual life has a reason for existence as a valuable contribution to the fabric of humanity. Consciously make a good contribution.

“The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not the State but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble and sublime, while the herd as such remains dull in thought and full in feeling.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph’s empathic abilities happen for a reason. Joseph’s Autism focuses his empathic abilities. Without those two “happenings”, Joseph would be unable to communicate with Madelyn, Brother Basil, and the Spirit side.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

67

Live a life of purpose

What is “purpose”? Purpose is focus. Focus on a goal. Focus on a cause. Focus on change for the better. Purpose gives meaning and an action plan to “everything happens for a reason”. Purpose is the means to make a conscious, and valuable, contribution to the fabric of humanity. Live a life of conscious, righteous, purpose.

“The value of a man (person) should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph lives a life of purpose by inspiring purpose in others. Caregivers find purpose in graciously assisting functionality. Brother Basil finds purpose in teaching wisdom to this world and in Joseph’s contributions to that wisdom. Joseph’s purpose inspires love, acceptance and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

68

Don't let someone convince you that you can't do something

What can't you do? Why not? "Someone" doesn't know what you can, or cannot, do. Only you know what you can do at this moment, and how you are going to expand your abilities for the future. Expand by setting goals. Expand by planning a course of action. Expand, and never give up.

"Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dreams is more powerful than the one with all the facts."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Some people are convinced that Joseph cannot empathically communicate. Because they cannot empathically communicate. Because Joseph, and Brother Basil, refuse to communicate with or acknowledge their closed minds. Because they see only the Autistic outward shell of disability and are convinced that they know what Joseph can, and cannot, do. These people are bigots, and they are wrong.

"Joseph's Blessing"

69

People hear what they want to hear

Have you dealt with people who refuse to listen? Refuse to consider a different idea? A different plan? Vehemently refuse even the slightest modification? We have all dealt with the unreasonable. Been outraged. Circumvented their obstacles. Think. Listen. Be flexible and open. Consider your own positions. Are you the one only hearing what you want to hear?

“Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has no prejudices, he always listens and responds with an open mind. Brother Basil has no prejudices. Brother Basil always responds with non-judgmental understanding, love, and acceptance.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

70

*Labels serve no purpose,
knowing the name of
something isn't knowing it*

Labels are stereotypes. Stereotypes are negative, even when they appear to be positive, because they are a generalized statement about a complex human. Implicitly biased categorization. How can labels possibly prove useful? They obscure the individual.

*“Of course, understanding of our fellow beings is important.
But this understanding becomes fruitful only when it is
sustained by sympathetic feeling in joy and in sorrow.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a label: Autism. What does the “Autism” label mean? That he is different. How different and in what ways? The label offers no clues. No details, just a general category of negative bias. Useless.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

71

*The right people will come into
your life at the right time*

How can you know who is the right person and if it's the right time? Listen to your soul. Your inner voice. Listen without reasoning. Ask the opinion of others, but listen to yourself. Listen without forcing a conclusion out of desperation. Listen with your soul. You know.

*“Stay away from negative people. They
have a problem for every solution.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph listens with his soul. His inner voice. He knows when the right person has come at the right time. Communication with the “right” person will be easy and positive. Communication that finds a solution to every problem.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

72

Worry doesn't solve problems

Humans worry because the future is uncertain. Planning alleviates worry. Planning is positive action for the future. Does planning make the future “certain”? No. But it gives thought and direction for future potentialities. Thought and direction that may require modification and flexibility when the future becomes the present.

“Man plans and God laughs.”

ANONYMOUS

Joseph doesn't worry about the future. He is content with each day as it comes, always optimistic. Expecting the best from others. Giving his best.

“Joseph's Blessing”

73

*Give more, and expect
more in return*

What do you have to give? What do you expect in return? The only thing you have to give is your best effort. The only thing that you should expect is the best effort of others in return. Elevate yourself, and others, to the highest standards. The highest moral standards. The highest standards worthy of emulation.

“I most seriously believe that one does people the best service by giving them some elevating work to do and thus indirectly elevating them.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is more, and gives more, than expected from his outward appearance. Joseph always gives his best effort. Brother Basil always gives his best effort. Both of them expect the best efforts of others in return.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

74

The past was not as bright as remembered, and the future is not as dark as feared

The past is colored by our memories and perceptions. Memories and perceptions influenced not only by our present circumstances, but also by the remembered circumstances at the time of the experience. Past memories influence future fears. Even if the past was bright, we fear that the future cannot be as good. Fear will consume the future. Hope is the only option. Hope that even if the present is dark, the future will be brighter. Plan with optimism. Hope for tomorrow.

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph remembers the bright past, but he always has hope for an equally bright future. Hope for Brother Basil’s message to be fulfilled. Hope for understanding, love, and gracious acceptance.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

75

*Free your soul from
hatred and bitterness*

Hatred and bitterness take conscious effort. Effort that drains the soul. Effort that eclipses the good, eclipses the light, so that only hatred and bitterness remain. Hatred and bitterness that creates heartless and wicked people. Do not be consumed. Keep your light. Keep your soul.

“I wouldn’t have thought it possible that there could exist such heartless and outright wicked people.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has encountered some heartless and wicked people. He has been attacked both verbally and physically. Because he remembers them, Joseph is fearful of strangers. Afraid to reach out unless he’s certain that the stranger can be a friend. Afraid to communicate until he receives validation from someone Joseph already trusts. Validation from me. Validation from Brother Basil. Validation from his beloved Grandmother and other Spirit family members. Validation from Joseph’s own soul.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

76

Don't be afraid to make mistakes

We all make mistakes. Make decisions that seemed correct at the time. Make decisions that we later regretted. Decisions and actions that turned out to be mistakes. Decisions that we thought were a good idea given the circumstances and information available. Mistakes are to be learned from, and hopefully not to be repeated in the future. Don't dwell on them. Move forward.

*“Anyone who has never made a mistake
has never tried anything new.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph makes functional mistakes. Joseph repeats functional mistakes because he is trying to learn something that seems easy to others, but Autism makes it difficult. He is trying, and he knows that he's making the mistake, it's just hard to correct it with his physical limitations. Joseph is doing his best.

“Joseph's Blessing”

77

Problems are an opportunity to learn new skills

Everyone has problems. Everyone. They're different problems, some more life threatening than others, but everyone has problems. The difference is the way in which we handle our problems. The difference is attitude and hope. Do you face your problems, or hide from them? Do you cause more problems by your reaction? Do you think it through? Have a goal? Plan for a better future? Your answers are personal and private, be honest with yourself. Acknowledge problems and resolve to achieve balance. Don't allow problems to consume your life, your mind, your soul. Have hope, and move forward.

*“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your
balance, you must keep moving.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has problems. Having Autism is a problem. Having Autism is also a blessing. Being freed from the everyday stresses of normal functioning life allows Joseph to expand his empathic abilities. He is freed to communicate in an above-normal manner. Freed to have hope and move forward. Freed to keep us all in balance.

“Joseph's Blessing”

78

Do the things that scare you the most

What are you scared of, deep down, in your soul? Scared to acknowledge that you're scared. I confess, I'm scared of transcribing this message and explaining how Joseph communicates from the other side with Brother Basil, and his beloved Grandmother, and the others. Scared that I cannot adequately explain. Scared that Joseph, who seems so unable, so non-functional, will be misunderstood. Scared that I'm not the correct choice, not sufficient for the task, not good enough. My soul trembles when Brother Basil and the others communicate. My soul trembles with fear of my shortcomings. My soul trembles with the certainty and the knowledge that I can do this. I have been chosen. I will do this thing that scares me the most.

“When I was young, all I wanted and expected from life was to sit quietly in some corner doing my work without the public paying attention to me.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph isn't scared. He doesn't know to be scared. To him, empathic communication is normal. Why would anyone think otherwise?

“Joseph's Blessing”

79

Make today your favorite day

Today is the day that you have, to be lived either as good or bad, live it as good. Today is the time you can grasp and experience, make it your favorite day. Look forward to tomorrow being your next favorite day, when it becomes your today, tomorrow. Free yourself to love today.

*“Everything that is really great and inspiring is created
by the individual who can labor in freedom.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Everyday is Joseph's favorite day, giving him the freedom to be more than he appears to be. Freedom to be inspired. He lives a quiet, happy life surrounded by those who care about, and protect him. Joseph is our favorite person, living his favorite day, everyday.

“Joseph's Blessing”

80

Struggles make you who you are

Nobody likes to struggle, and we would all prefer not to learn through adversity. Struggles, and adversity, happen. To everyone. It takes strength to understand the learning experience inherent in struggle. Strength to resolve the situation. Strength to move away. Strength to learn for the future. Personal strength. Strength of soul.

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius, and a lot of courage, to move in the opposite direction.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph struggles. Everyday. He struggles with functionality. He struggles for acceptance. He struggles to be accepting of others who are unaccepting of him. He struggles to understand the unkind, the ungracious, those lacking in empathy and unable to successfully communicate. He has learned that not everyone can be reached. Not everyone can listen with understanding. Sometimes, the only option is to move in the opposite direction.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Feel blessed for what you have

By what name do you call God? What difference does it make? Why would God care what name you use in reverence? God cares about the person. About the depth and decency of the soul. About who, not what, you are. About acceptance, love, and understanding.

“A Spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, a Spirit vastly superior to that of man, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

The Spirits are acceptance, love and understanding. Joseph has an innocent, perfect soul. Joseph is acceptance, love and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

82

*When life gets harder,
become stronger*

When life gets harder, seek community to become stronger with support. Inner strength is primary, but it's good to have a sympathetic support system. People who share your moral standards. People of integrity and honesty. People capable of empathy. Capable of acceptance and understanding. People, like you.

“Without creative personalities able to think and judge independently, the upward development of society is as unthinkable as the development of the individual personality without the nourishing soil of the community.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has my community. My friends are our friends. Joseph also has his own community. His friends with whom he communicates. Brother Basil, his Grandmother, the others. His friends are our friends.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Life is a series of choices

What choices have you made? How have they impacted your life, and the lives of others? Not all choices are monumental, but even the trivial choices create a pattern of behavior. A life pattern that shapes personality and moral standards. The easy choice is easy, but is it right? Choices are actions, and actions have consequences. Even a simple everyday choice (What should I eat for breakfast?) has consequences to your health, and a ripple effect on everyone interested in your well-being. Consciously consider your choices, big and small.

“I soon learned to scent out what was able to lead to fundamentals and to turn aside from everything else, from the multitude of things that clutter up the mind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is hypersensitive to his surroundings. Sound. Movement. Texture. Touch. Empathic demands. His perceptions are filled with “things that clutter up the mind”. To calm the clutter, Joseph makes a series of choices that seem odd. Repetitive behaviors (called “stims” in the Autism world) that seem unusual to outsiders, but are as calming and centering to him as a repetitive phrase chanted during meditation. Repetitive behaviors that create a foundation to set aside the clutter and engage in conscious thought. Conscious choice.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

84

Forget your age and live fully

Biological age and mental age are distinct from each other. Becoming elderly brings deterioration of the physical body, but also the blessing of experience and knowledge. Cultivate wisdom and respect as an elder, not because of biological age, but because of a full and well-led life.

“All of one’s contemporaries and aging friends are living in a delicate balance, and one feels that one’s own consciousness is no longer as brightly lit as it once was. But then, twilight with its more subdued colors has its charms as well.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is an adult, but he retains the pure innocence and bright spirit of a child. He has no arrogance, no greed, no agenda. He lives life with functional difficulty in this world, but in empathic perfection with Brother Basil, his Grandmother, and those on the other side. Physical age and ability have no meaning in a life fully lived.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Step outside your comfort zone

Everyone has psychological comfort zones. Areas of understanding, of within our control, of no surprises, of this-is-how-it-should-be. Comfort zones do not welcome change. When comfort zones are common to a society, common to a group, common to a culture, they become mythic in importance. Not just the way-it-should-be, but the way-it-is. Factual authority. Circumstances change, and comfort zones become obsolete. Circumstances change and comfort zones need modification, re-thinking. New choices. New ideas. New comfort zones.

“The foundation of morality should not be made dependent on myth nor tied to any authority lest doubt about the myth or about the legitimacy of the authority imperil the foundation of sound judgment and action.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's comfort zone includes both his physical and psychological environments. He loves his home with its physical comforts and environment conducive to empathic abilities. Routine is comfort zone. Environmental control without distractions is comfort zone. Quiet inner thought is comfort zone. Communication is comfort zone. Communication with Brother Basil. Communication with empathic others. Communication with me.

“Joseph's Blessing”

86

Talent is hard work

What are your talents? What do you love to do because you're "good at it"? Talents that allow you to be gifted in specific areas. Talents that you love to acknowledge. Talents that you experiment with to develop new proficiency. The core ability, the foundational talent, requires nurturing, practice, hard work. Fulfill your inherent talent potential and become extraordinary.

"No amount of experimentation can ever prove me right; a single experiment can prove me wrong."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is a talent experiment. Brother Basil nurtures and experiments with Joseph's empathic talents in order to disclose Joseph's full inherent potential. Not only does he possess, and constantly nurture his empathic abilities, but Joseph also brings out the talent in others. Brings them to understanding. Brings them to look beyond the physical. Brings them to light.

"Joseph's Blessing"

See beauty in difference

What is different about you? Who judges whether it is a “good” or a “bad” difference? Judge for yourself, and judge yourself “good”. Judge yourself “good”, with the potential for positive improvement. Being different makes each of us a unique human being. Being different is integral to who we are, and helps define who we should be.

*“A man (person) should look for what is, and
not for what he thinks should be.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is different. Very different. Physically beautiful but functionally different. That is “what is” on the surface, but viewing the surface does not reveal what “should be”. Does not reveal the beauty in difference. Look empathically at difference, and see the true spectrum.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

88

*Give God permission to
work on the situation*

Do you have hope for the future? The belief that circumstances will improve? That success has a “path”? Then you are giving God permission to work on the situation, even if you do not specifically believe in or worship God. Permission to render assistance.

“My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Brother Basil is not God, but he speaks God’s message of love, hope, and acceptance. The eternal message of God for humanity.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Don't overthink, keep it simple

What do you want to do? How can you do it in the most expedient manner? Do it. When new issues arise, do it again taking into account the changed circumstances. Working step-by-step to achieve your goal.

“It would be possible to describe everything scientifically, but it would make no sense; it would be without meaning, as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of wave pressure.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph requires step-by-step instructions and assistance with functional skills. If he overthinks it, he worries about failure and becomes paralyzed with fear. Fear of inability. Fear of disappointment. Fear of attempting new skills. Step-by-step with patience. Step-by-step with understanding. Step-by-step with love and acceptance.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

90

You cannot create a new beginning, but you can create a new ending

The beginning has already begun and cannot be changed. Move forward. Look back for inspiration, focus, assessment and planning. Ask questions and find answers for the future. Never look back at the beginning with fear, annoyance or regret. Repair the beginning damage, make yourself and others whole, and move forward to a successful and happy ending.

*“Don’t listen to the person who has the answers;
listen to the person who has the questions.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph’s beginning, his childhood, was spent desperately trying to “fix” his Autism. Many professionals claimed to have answers. Answers for a systemic “cure”, both traditional and nontraditional. There was no “fix”, no “cure”, no answers. Because they did not understand the question. Joseph doesn’t need to be “cured” because, although a functional “fix” would enhance his abilities, Autism is a part of who he is. Autism is not a disease.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Attitude is a choice

Circumstances often happen without our choice. Without our permission or conscious decision. You cannot control everything, but you can control your response. Gather information and respond in a positive manner. Offer reasonable compromise and workable solutions. Be flexible and gracious.

“The only thing more dangerous than ignorance is arrogance.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph generally cannot consciously control his circumstances, but he always has a gracious and positive attitude. Joseph is sometimes ignorant of the social rules but he is never arrogant, always seeking to accommodate others for the good of all.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

92

Accept yourself, and others, without criticism

You are a human being of great value and purpose. Others are also human beings of great value and purpose. Human works-in-progress. There is nothing to criticize because although there is always room for improvement, you are all doing your very best. Be kind and gracious and forgiving.

“The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which he has attained liberation from the self.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Before Brother Basil’s teaching, I was unable to graciously accept a compliment. I answered with self-deprecating humor instead of a “thank you” and return compliment. It was an unconscious criticism of myself, and of the other person’s favorable judgment of me.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

93

Believe in the goodness of people

Do you believe that humans are inherently good, or inherently bad? Your answer to this question will fundamentally define your sub-conscious judgment of others. Define your initial reaction upon meeting someone new. Define your attitude. Define you. Define yourself as optimistic and welcoming. Seek confirmation of human “good” while being receptive to potential proof of the “bad” in human nature. Seek empathy and reformation to turn “bad” into “good”, thereby validating your fundamental belief in the goodness of people. Seek goodness and meaning in your life by helping others to seek meaning and goodness in their lives.

“The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph sees only the goodness in people. Joseph sees goodness and the potential for friendship even in those who deem his life meaningless. He has empathy and seeks understanding for those who see only the symptoms of Autism and deem him without value as a person.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

94

You are stronger than you imagine

No one knows their strength until adversity tests it. Have faith that no matter what happens you will not crumble. Your first attempt to overcome the adversity may not succeed, but you have the strength to try again, and again, changing tactics and learning from experience. Success takes many different forms because failure is not an option.

“If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should beg night and day and never be satisfied. I should sit apart in awful solitude a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and others to be happy, I escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation.”

HELEN KELLER

Joseph leads a quiet, content, and happy life. Just like Helen Keller who was both blind and deaf, Joseph regards the physical disabilities of Autism as a fact, as a part of who he is. Joseph is stronger than anyone imagines.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

95

You control your response to other people's behavior

Calmness is not weakness. Calmness in the face of adversity comes from experience, maturity, and inner strength. Calmness when confronted with obnoxious behavior is incredibly annoying - to the obnoxious person. They seek to control your response. They want to elicit an equally obnoxious response and engage in dispute. Ignore them and they will seek a different adversary. Refuse to be a victim. Refuse to engage.

*“Weak people seek revenge. Strong people
forgive. Intelligent people ignore.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has the innate intelligence to ignore obnoxious behavior, although he does understand and remember when the behavior involves him. If the behavior is physical, Joseph will resist. If the obnoxious behavior is verbal, Joseph will laugh in the face of the belligerent until they desist and go away. Laughing is an extremely effective, and intelligent, response.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Stop making comparisons

Comparison to the lives of others is useless. Your life is yours, to be lived to its fullest. You cannot switch places with someone else. More importantly, you do not want to switch places with someone else. You are the role model for your life.

“I do not much believe in education. Each man (person) ought to be his own model, however frightful that may be.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

When Joseph was a child, I would unfavorably compare him to other children. “Normal” children progressing in a “normal” manner. Comparison was useless, negative, and depressing, distracting me from the unique and wonderful attributes of my “not normal” son. Each person is unique. Each life path is unique, no comparison is possible or necessary.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Seek your own approval

You possess many talents. Things that you like to do. Do them. Frequently. Do what you enjoy without seeking approval from others. If you desire the company of others, seek those who share your interests, but do not engage in competition. Enjoy yourself.

“This is quite natural: everybody likes to do that for which he has a talent.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph approves of himself, and others. He enjoys his own company, his own meditative thoughts, and he enjoys not being disturbed. When he has something to communicate, Joseph will make himself available for contact, otherwise, he values peace and solitude.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

98

*You have a strong purpose
in life, never lose hope*

Everyone's life has purpose. Your life has purpose. Look deeply. What are you meant to do with a clear heart and mind? Find the courage to seek your purpose. Find the courage to fulfill your destiny and make the world a better place because your life matters.

“We will not change the hearts of other men (people) by mechanisms, but by changing our hearts and speaking bravely ... When we are clear in heart and mind - only then- shall we find courage to surmount the fear which haunts the world.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's life has purpose. He lives with a clear heart and mind, and a destiny to make the world a better place by contributing his autism insights to Brother Basil's message. His life matters.

“Joseph's Blessing”

99

Life is an experience without explanation

Life doesn't need an explanation. Life is choices. Life is change, Life is experiences. Life is remembering the past and seeking the future while living in the present. Life is surprises and the mysterious unknown. Life is beyond explanation. Life is to be lived.

“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph enjoys his life even though he often experiences Autistic symptoms for which there is no explanation. Repetitive behaviors that defy “normal” experience but are satisfying and calming to him. Autism functionality experiences that are a part of his life. Experiences that defy scientific explanation and are mysterious in origin. Life is beyond explanation. Life is to be lived.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

100

Don't criticize, encourage

Do you like to be criticized? No. Even “constructive” criticism is hurtful rather than helpful. Encouragement is much more effective than criticism. Encouragement creates positive room for improvement. Encouragement allows the individual to understand and choose a better path. Encouragement is kindness, criticism is unkind.

“Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”

MARK TWAIN

Joseph is never critical of others, although others are often critical of him. Being critical of his Autism is not only unkind, it is unproductive. He cannot discard the Autism and choose a “normal” path. “Normal” isn't an available option, but he can be encouraged to do his very best within his functional abilities. Joseph always responds positively to kindness. Joseph always does his very best.

“Joseph's Blessing”

101

Nobody's perfect

Some people seem perfect. They aren't. Some people think that they're perfect. They not only aren't perfect, they're incredibly annoying and psychologically disabled. Stay away from them. Perfection is no mistakes, no challenges, no unanswered questions. Perfection is not a human trait. Perfection should not be a human trait. Life is full of experiences, and challenges, and choices, and mystery. Life is full of disabilities and abilities and wonders. Perfection is stagnation and fear of imperfection. It's good that nobody's perfect.

“Forget your disabilities and explore your abilities.”

ANONYMOUS

Joseph, like everyone else, isn't perfect. He isn't perfect in many respects but his soul is perfect and pure. Nothing else “counts”.

“Joseph's Blessing”

102

*Don't define anyone or anything
in terms of "can't do"*

Never define anything about yourself, or others, with a negative statement. A negative attitude. A negative pre-conception. You don't know what you "can't do" until you try. When you try something, and can't do it, try again in a different way. Try until you "can do", or discover the reason for "can't do", and change direction. Change direction and analyze your actions so that "can't do" is a step in the process of "working on it" for the future "can do".

*"I never made one of my discoveries through
the process of rational thinking."*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

There are many functional things that Joseph can't do ... at the present time. He's working on them. Step-by-step. Slowly. Repetitively. Diligently with good humor. Willing to try, again and again. Never give up, "can't do" isn't permanent.

"Joseph's Blessing"

103

Everyone, and every experience, is part of the journey

Changing course is not giving up, it's part of the journey. Part of the process. Flexibility is learning from experience. The journey of life is never a straight trajectory, it twists and turns with every experience, everyone you meet, every decision made. Your journey is vibrant, intuitive, ever-changing and exciting. Journey with conscious intent.

“There is no logical way to the discovery of these elemental laws. There is only the way of intuition, which is helped by a feeling for the order lying behind the appearance.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's journey is a path of intuitive understanding far beyond his “appearance”. Far beyond the outward deception of Autism. Joseph welcomes everyone, and every experience, as part of his journey of love, acceptance, and understanding. Brother Basil and Madelyn guide Joseph's intuition, creating “a feeling for the order lying behind the appearance”. Enabling empathic communication.

“Joseph's Blessing”

104

Bring light into someone's day

Be a positive role model as you travel life's journey. Be a positive role model for everyone you meet. Be a positive role model for yourself with a light-filled attitude and determined personality. Model enthusiasm. Model graciousness. Model inclusiveness. Optimism is contagious, spread it around!

"No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."

HELEN KELLER

Joseph radiates happiness. He loves, and is loved by, many devoted souls on this side and beyond. Joseph is always optimistic, enthusiastic, gracious and inclusive.

"Joseph's Blessing"

105

Always keep your word

How you treat others matters, greatly. Never make a promise you can't keep, and never renege. If circumstances change, making the promised actions impossible, explain what has happened and make new arrangements. Never ignore the change, and always act with the highest ethical standards. Uphold the highest ethical standards for yourself, and for others.

“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph upholds the highest ethical standards because he cannot lie. He is a literal thinker and doesn't understand, or speak, untruths. (He also doesn't understand, or speak, humor, sarcasm or idiomatic expressions.)

“Joseph's Blessing”

106

*Thinking positively takes
discipline and practice*

Every life journey has moments when maintaining a positive attitude takes discipline and practice. Conscious, deliberate, discipline and practice. Conscious positive effort to prevent negative thoughts and depression. Conscious positive effort to go forward when faced with adversity. There is no other way.

On if his life was a success: “Neither on my deathbed nor before will I ask myself such a question. Nature is not an engineer or a contractor, and I myself am a part of Nature.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph faces the adversity of Autism every day. Every day, every hour, every moment of his life. Daunting. Pervasive. Depressing. Does he crumble and give up? Never. Joseph always forges forward with a positive attitude and does his very best. Everyday, every hour, every moment of his life.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

107

Treat others as you wish to be treated

You want to be treated with love, acceptance, and understanding. With kindness. With graciousness. With inclusion. You must be the leader, the role model. You must treat others in the manner you wish to be treated, so that they may learn from your example. So that they may treat you as you treat them.

“If we are to achieve a richer culture, we must weave one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.”

MARGARET MEADE

Joseph has many “diverse human gifts”, including the gift of second sight which leads to empathic understanding. He has a very sensitive nature and needs to be treated in a sensitive manner as though he understands everything that is going on around him because he is consciously listening. Treat him as you wish to be treated, and Joseph will invite you to experience empathic understanding. Invite you to experience the gift of the extraordinary.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

108

*Having empathy is more
important than being right*

You should admit when you're wrong, and correct your mistakes. But life is not a contest between who is "right" and who is "wrong". Remember that empathy is understanding, not necessarily agreement. Understanding of diverse opinions. Diverse backgrounds. Diverse experiences. Empathy understands that each individual is unique, and out of that uniqueness builds consensus.

*"The great moral teachers of humanity were, in
a way, artistic geniuses in the art of living."*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph sometimes misinterprets the "real" world expectations and norms, but he always has empathy for everyone. Tapping into this empathy, this pureness of soul, Joseph assists Brother Basil to communicate as a "great moral teacher of humanity".

"Joseph's Blessing"

109

*Try new things without
fear of failure*

Carefully consider, and accept, the consequences if things don't go exactly as planned. This is not failure, it is the process for success. If you fear failure, you will never try. If you never try, you will never know success. New things, new experiences, new ideas are full of mystery and potential. Try. Modify. Try again, and again with new insight. Success.

*“I am certain that it is the mystery of not
understanding that attracts people; it impresses
them with the aura and magnetism of mystery.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is hesitant to try new things because he fears failure. Fears disapproval. Fears not being perfect. New things, new ideas, are introduced slowly, step-by-step so that “trying” can be successful. There are no negative repercussions for lack of success. Try again with new insight, new modification. Try again, and again. Have patience, trying is difficult. Success will come.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

110

Accept who you are, and teach those who disrespect you

Who are you? You are many likes and dislikes. Many opinions and ideas. Many personality attitudes that change with the circumstances. Attitudes that modify to accommodate the immediate situation and the human interactions involved. Do you feel disrespected because of who you are? Speak up. Speak truth. Model and teach respect. Model and teach empathy. Model and teach acceptance. Model leadership.

“Treat people the way you want to be treated. Talk to people the way you want to be talked to. Respect is earned, not given.”

HUSSEIN NISHAH

Joseph appears to have Autism, and he is often disrespected because of it. Disrespected because he looks different. Acts different. Is different. Disrespected because he seems unconscious. Unaware of his surroundings. Unaware of other people. Brother Basil and Joseph teach otherwise. Teach respect. Teach empathy. Teach acceptance. Teach inclusion and leadership.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

111

Help someone's soul

Help someone's soul, even if your own soul is in need. Reach out now. Don't wait until the perfect moment when your soul is enlightened. Now is the perfect moment, and reaching to help another is the enlightenment you seek.

“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Everything, and everyone, is a miracle. One of the miracles is that everyone has a soul. Joseph is always willing to help someone's soul by giving of his own, allowing them to experience a glimpse of his pure radiant innocence.

“Joseph's Blessing”

112

*Positive thinking creates
positive solutions*

Positive thinking creates a positive attitude. Positive attitude creates positive interactions with others. These positive interactions create positive and success-oriented dialogue, which creates consensus, which creates compromise and a step-by-step workable plan, which leads to positive action, positive results ... and ... positive solutions.

“My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit as well as physically.”

STEPHEN HAWKING

Autism is a physical disability impacting the brain and nervous system. Joseph is severely functionally impacted, but he doesn’t dwell on it. Joseph’s spirit is extraordinary and shines through the physical interference of Autistic symptoms into a realm of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

113

Be uncomfortable with the results, and seek better

Set personal standards, personal goals, and exceed them. Always try to do better, not only in competition with others, but also in competition with yourself. What happened the last time? Consciously plan to do better than your last “best try”.

“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is very curious ... about everything ... and he always does his best to understand “what’s going on”. When he misunderstands, he carefully considers the adult explanation and standards, and gives the requested goal another “best try”. Best try, and best try again, always seeking better.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

114

*Feelings are easily injured,
and difficult to mend*

Always be encouraging and gracious. Make people feel important and valued. No person, even if their circumstances seem unfortunate, is worthless. No life is without value.

“Never ignore somebody with a disability. You don’t realize how much they can inspire you!”

ANONYMOUS

Joseph’s empathic soul is an inspiration. His circumstances appear, on the surface, to be unfortunate and his life of lesser value, but his Autism has encouraged him to be extraordinary. Extraordinary as a conduit for divine knowledge. Extraordinary as an example of determination. Extraordinary as a person of value.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

115

*There's always something
new to learn*

Seek to consciously learn something new every day from every experience. Not everything you learn will be individually monumental and inspiring, but even the seemingly insignificant adds to your storehouse of knowledge. Everything adds to the education of your soul.

“Studying, and striving for truth and beauty in general, is a sphere in which we are allowed to be children throughout life.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a bright, pure, innocent, childlike striving for truth and beauty in general. Specifically, he uses every experience to discover truth and beauty in those around him. Every experience touches Joseph's soul, and his soul touches the souls of others.

“Joseph's Blessing”

116

*Don't feed fear, and it
will fail to thrive*

There is a popular parable attributed to Native Americans titled the “Wolves Within” where a grandfather uses a metaphor of two wolves fighting within him, one good and one evil, to explain inner conflicts to his grandson. When the grandson asks which wolf wins, the grandfather answers which-ever wolf he chooses to feed. Feed only your good wolf, your courage, your inner strength and starve the evil fear.

*“Perfect love casts out all fear.
But, perfect fear casts out all love.”*

ANONYMOUS

Joseph doesn't have an evil wolf, his soul is pure. He has no inner conflict and therefore no fear, just love. Joseph loves perfectly, and is loved perfectly in return.

“Joseph's Blessing”

117

Tell yourself a positive story

Follow your inner voice. The voice that is optimistic for the future and enthusiastic to be you. Tell yourself a positive story about your past, your present, and your future. Tell yourself a positive story and keep it in your heart and soul so that it defines who you are, and who you will become.

*“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”*

HELEN KELLER

Joseph is an optimist. His story is one of faith leading to achievement. His story is one of hope and confidence for the present and for the future.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

118

You take yourself wherever you go

You are your most important friend, your constant companion, the heart who knows you the best. Your view of you is the opinion that “counts” the most. Love yourself. Love yourself and you will have the ability to love others.

*“The problem is not the person’s disability,
the problem is society’s view of the person’s abilities.”*

ANONYMOUS

Autism “experts” have seen Joseph’s disability and dismissed his extraordinary abilities. These “experts” inform society’s views of the differently abled. Autism is not the problem, it’s a physical attribute. Society tends to see only the functional disability and dismiss all other less obvious abilities as inconsequential. That’s the problem.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

119

*Things not going as planned
doesn't mean they've gone
wrong, just differently*

Plans are aspirations. Hopes for the future, but not certainty. Plans are meant to be modified as circumstances change. Things not going as planned is to be expected, accepted as part of the mystery of life, and welcomed. Plans going differently is a positive indication that plans are progressing. You're moving forward.

“Failure and deprivation are the best educators and purifiers.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph often attempts something beyond his current abilities, and fails. Failure is temporary until the next try, and the next, until his abilities improve sufficiently to enable success. There will never be success if he accepts failure and doesn't try again with modification from experience. Encouragement to try again leads to success.

“Joseph's Blessing”

120

Life requires commitment

Never settle for less than the very best you can achieve. Estimate the amount of time and effort required to complete your project, to reach your goal. Then double your estimate because everything takes longer and is more involved than you initially think, and consciously make the commitment. Then honor your commitment even when unexpected limitations arise.

“The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.”

HELEN KELLER

Joseph has made a life commitment to overcome his functional limitations to the best of his abilities. Brother Basil and Madelyn have made their commitment to assist Joseph through communication and spiritual guidance.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

121

Know what success looks like so you can find it

Often, what seems good is ultimately disappointing. Have you failed? No. You have gained valuable experience on your path to success. Your definition of success changes as you gain insight, experience new ideas, new paths, new circumstances. Be flexible and accepting. Your definition of success lies within you.

“Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.”

HELEN KELLER

Joseph is happy, and in his happiness lies success against those who only see his physical difficulties. Those others who cannot be loving, accepting, and understanding do not diminish his joy for life. They do not diminish Joseph.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

122

Normal doesn't exist, all people are unique

What is a “normal” human? The answer would factor in so many variables, that there is no possible answer. Be tolerant and understanding of the individuality of others. Become a role model, a leader, a teacher so that others may learn tolerance and understanding from your example. Remember that words leave scars and create damage. Seek to be extraordinary in both words and deeds. Seek to inspire others. Make the extraordinary “normal”.

“Every person with a disability is an individual.”

ITZHAK PERLMAN

Joseph is a unique individual not defined by the constraints of definition. Not defined by the ego-centric bias of others. Not defined by what is “normal” but by what is “extraordinary”.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

123

Everyone has a message if you listen

Listen with understanding. Listen with conscious effort. Welcome questions and question assumptions. Welcome everyone's message with tolerance and understanding. Present your message clearly and graciously so that you may be heard with tolerance and understanding. Seek consensus for the good of all.

“Laws alone cannot secure freedom of expression; in order that every man (person) present his views without penalty there must be spirit of tolerance in the entire population.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's message is his own as are the messages from Brother Basil and Madelyn. Spirit messages sent through empathic communication. This method of communication is unusual and requires a “spirit of tolerance in the entire population”. A spirit of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

124

*Make a difference in
someone's life*

Love someone. Not necessarily romantic love. Love as a friend. Love as a teacher. Love as family. Love with empathy, acceptance and understanding. Love because you want to be loved.

*“Love brings much happiness,
much more than pining brings pain.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph loves completely and without hesitation. Joseph loves and is loved.

“Joseph's Blessing”

125

*Manage time wisely and
focus on the heart*

All problems are simple, once they're solved. Consciously make time to ponder and focus on your inner knowledge. Meditate on the message in your heart, and follow your moral path.

*“He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt
in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph leads a quite, simple, comfortable life. He spends his days in meditation and constant communication with Brother Basil and the others. Joseph spends his days in rapt awe, focused on inner knowledge and the moral message of his heart.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

126

*Don't dwell on
negative thoughts*

See the humor in every situation, even if it is in retrospect. Even the most embarrassing situations can become positive self-stories. Look to the lesson that was learned and view the past mistake as something that happened inadvertently, and is not to be repeated. Laugh at yourself, and move forward.

*“I thank God for my handicaps, for through them
I have found myself, my work, and my God.”*

HELEN KELLER

Joseph does not consider himself to be handicapped in any way. Without his Autistic characteristics, he would not be the extraordinary empathic person that he is. Without his Autism, Joseph would be merely ordinary. There have been times where his Autism has led to embarrassing situations (usually because of misinterpretation by the non-autistic), but he doesn't dwell on negative thoughts due to accidental miscommunication. He good-naturedly accepts the limitations of those around him.

“Joseph's Blessing”

127

You have all that you need, just not in the form you expect

Don't just accept the unacceptable because the acceptable arrives in an unexpected form. What is unacceptable to you? The answer to this question should always have a moral foundation of ethical standards, but the specific answer depends on the specific situation. Seize the opportunity for emotional and intellectual personal growth. Work with what you have, making it more than sufficient for your needs. Work with what you have, making it more than sufficiently acceptable.

*“Intellectual growth should commence at
birth and cease only at death.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is my son. Would I have chosen an Autistic child? No, but he is the son I have and he is so much more than acceptable. He has taught me unconditional love and immensely expanded my emotional and personal growth in ways too numerous to count. Would Joseph have chosen to be functionally disabled? No, being “normal” would be easier, more acceptable to the outside world. Autism is not a choice, so Joseph has accepted his Autism and gone beyond his functional limitations to become extraordinary in other ways.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

128

*Difficult challenges
lead to wisdom*

Complicated questions require patience and careful consideration. Step-by-step consideration and analysis to prevent unintended consequences. Does the answer feel intuitively correct? Is the solution inspired? Fair and beneficial to all concerned? Have you gained wisdom and insight as an individual? Wisdom and insight as a community? When these answers are truthfully affirmative, go forward with wisdom and compassion, keeping an open mind and an open heart.

“I believe in intuition and inspiration. At times I feel certain I am right while not knowing the reason.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph faces difficult challenges every day. Has he gained wisdom? Yes. Because of his sweet gracious nature, his open mind and open heart, Joseph has been chosen by Brother Basil to partner with his message. Brother Basil's wisdom.

“Joseph's Blessing”

129

*Whoever humiliates or
scorns another will receive
the same themselves*

Who are you to humiliate or scorn anyone, at anytime, for any purpose? Why would anyone do such a morally reprehensible act? Is anyone so perfect that they have the right to judge another? No. Never judge the person, judge the circumstances, and seek to remedy injustice. Judge actions and seek to act in moral opposition. Judge what you can do in a positive manner without humiliation or scorn. Act with compassion and wisdom to make things better.

“Before God we are all equally wise - and equally foolish.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has been both humiliated and scorned. He has been viciously hurt in his soul, and he remembers each deliberate incident. Hurt by Autism “experts” in the guise of professional help. Hurt by the “normal” as an act of incomprehensible hostility and bullying. By those without love, acceptance, and understanding. Joseph remembers each hurt. He forgives but never forgets.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

130

You cannot rush or force things to happen

Things happen. Sometimes you have control, sometimes you don't. Carefully consider your response to the situation. Are you impatient? Acting with proper preparation and analysis? Consider the ethical and intuitive foundations of your actions. Consider wisdom gained through both personal and community prior experience. Have you done everything possible to act with love, acceptance, and understanding. Yes. Be calm.

“The only source of knowledge is experience.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph makes a conscious effort to be calm and patient. His life experience has been that he generally lacks control over his physical circumstances and if he needs help, he may need to wait until what he needs is clearly communicated. Empathic communication is helpful, but Joseph often neglects his own personal desires in the effort to communicate the wisdom of others.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

131

No one's life is perfect

No life is perfect, and no person is perfect. Envy and jealousy are useless emotions. Braggarts are annoying and untruthful, especially when “marketing” themselves through social media. Sometimes life presents difficulties, summon the strength and courage to go forward. Summon your experience. Summon your personal core values. Respond with love, acceptance, and understanding.

*“Hard things are put in our way, not to stop us,
but to call out our courage and strength.”*

ANONYMOUS

Autism is a hard thing, but it hasn't stopped Joseph. Autism hasn't stopped Brother Basil. Autism hasn't stopped us.

“Joseph's Blessing”

132

The mind is flexible

Whenever faced with a challenge, be flexible in your thinking. Be flexible in your response. What you deem “reality” is often a set of opinions. A set of pre-conceived notions about how the world works. Pre-conceived notions from personal experience. Pre-conceived notions taught by respected members of your community. Pre-conceived notions creating a comfort zone of response. Pre-conceived notions that are irrelevant to the present situation. Look at the unique reality of the present situation without the illusion of bias.

“Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph’s life with Autism seems like a stark reality, but that stark reality is an illusion when his empathic gifts are considered. How fabulous to be a conduit for wisdom, how bright a reality to communicate empathically!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

133

Don't doubt yourself

Practice dignity for yourself and others. Dignity starts with your own self-respect. Your own self belief in your worth as a person. If you don't respect yourself, no one else will respect you. If you don't respect yourself, you cannot respect another. Never doubt that you are worthy of respect. Never doubt that you are worthy of love, acceptance, and understanding. Never doubt that you are worthy of positive belief, by yourself and others.

"The biggest disability of humans is unbelief."

ANONYMOUS

Joseph has positive belief in both himself and in others. He treats everyone with respect, even if they disrespect him. He treats everyone as an equal, even those who make no conscious effort to accept or understand him.

"Joseph's Blessing"

134

Animosity is self-destructive

Sometimes, the situation is deliberately not good. Bad things are happening, and someone is at fault. Is anger the appropriate response? Not by itself. The initial gut-reaction of anger, animosity, and outrage is valuable only when it fuels calm, rational response. Valuable only when it is not self-destructive.

“Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph never hates anyone, even if bad things are happening to him and someone is at fault. He assumes good in everyone, and often doesn't understand that an inexcusable act is deliberate. Brother Basil understands the inexcusable, and takes action on Joseph's behalf.

“Joseph's Blessing”

135

See with your soul

Where is your soul? In your heart. In your intuition. In your emotional and intellectual energy. In your moral standards. In your goodness and righteousness. In your empathy. In the very fiber of everything you are, and everything you will ever be. In your experiences, your responses, and your wisdom. You are your soul. You are love, acceptance and understanding. Always see with your soul.

*“True religion is real living; living with all one’s soul,
with all one’s goodness and righteousness.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a beautiful soul. Joseph sees everyone and everything through the eyes of his soul. Through pure innocence. Through goodness. Through love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

136

Be aware of miscommunication

Be a good listener. Listen with your soul. Listen with an open mind and an open heart. Listen with curiosity. Listen with the empathy that is understanding, not necessarily agreement. Listen to learn about new ideas, not just to confirm your preconceptions. Listen, and respond, with a neutral voice.

*“If you can’t explain it to a six year old,
you don’t understand it yourself.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is often the victim of miscommunication, and the resulting misunderstanding, because he is a literal thinker. He doesn’t understand humor (although he loves when people smile and laugh), sarcasm, acronyms, or colloquialisms. Although Brother Basil uses words, Joseph primarily thinks, and communicates, in visions, pictures, and sounds. Having the patience to communicate slowly and clearly using visual aids will prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

137

*We determine our treatment
by ourselves and others*

Treat everyone fairly and graciously, even if you disagree or lack interest. If rudeness is the only option, say nothing. If you don't care, don't pretend. If you have no interest, no enthusiasm, no concern, it will show. Apathy is obvious, and destructive to your soul. Find your soul's purpose and follow it. Find your passion and those who share it. Find your community and make the world better because you are here.

*“Science may have found a cure for most evils,
but it has found no remedy for the worst of
them all - the apathy of human beings.”*

HELEN KELLER

Joseph has no apathy. He treats everyone fairly, graciously and with interest, expecting the same treatment in return. Brother Basil also has no apathy, graciously imparting wisdom to all who will listen with their soul, expecting nothing tangible in return.

“Joseph's Blessing”

138

*Certainty is not the
same as truth*

The world is flat. People cannot fly. These are historical certainties, regarded as facts, which were not truths. What “certainties”, what information, do you know as truth? What certainties about different types of people? What types of information formed your “knowledge”? Was it someone else’s opinion? Value conversations with substance as well as theories and ideas. Analyze the source of all information. Is it biased? Does someone have an agenda? Consider all options. Consider all “truths”.

“Information is not knowledge.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has the certainty of a pure soul. He is simply incapable of an untruth and he doesn’t have, or understand, a personal agenda.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

139

Keep an open mind

Keep an open mind, and an open heart. Accept others with gracious and welcoming understanding. Listen with your soul. Gain wisdom and knowledge through experience. Every day adds to the extraordinary story. Be extraordinary.

“A little knowledge is dangerous. So is a lot.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph always listens, and responds, with his soul. Autism has created functional and physical challenges that have opened his mind and heart to greater communication, greater empathy, greater humanity.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

140

Everything is a puzzle piece

You are a piece in the universal puzzle of life. Make certain that you are a valuable puzzle piece. An indispensable puzzle piece. How? By being the very best you can be. By complete childlike acceptance of your journey, your path, in this life. Your path in space and time. By following your path with courage and determination. By helping others down their path with an open heart and an open mind. By being an example of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“I sometimes ask myself how it came about that I was the one to develop the theory of relativity. The reason, I think, is that a normal adult never stops to think about problems of space and time. These are things which he has thought about as a child.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is an empathic puzzle piece who needs lots of functional help in his physical journey. To be his help, to create a comfortable path in space and time for Joseph to receive and communicate his messages, is part of my path. The part of my journey that is blessed with Joseph's presence. Our puzzle pieces interlock, so that I may transcribe these messages. Interlock so that together, we are valuable and indispensable pieces of the puzzle. Pieces of the whole.

“Joseph's Blessing”

141

*Every day is a good
day to celebrate*

Celebrate every success, especially the small victories when circumstances are unfortunate. Small victories accumulate into bigger victories and greater cause for celebration. Celebrate with those who stand with you. Celebrate as an example of courage and determination. Celebrate in memory of the past, in acceptance of the present, and in hope for the future.

“I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph celebrates each day with music. He loves to listen to music and he feels each beautiful note, each musical phrase. Brother Basil communicates in words and thoughts for clarity of listener understanding and transcription. Joseph communicates in visions, music, and pictures for clarity of emotional understanding. Joseph communicates with his soul.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

142

Avoid those who benefit from the misfortune of others

Some people are meant to be your friend, and some aren't. Those who benefit from your misfortune (often paid professionals) may be necessary for resolution, but they aren't your friend. Family is an important part of your community, but the individual family members need to also be your friends. Friends assist your journey with love, acceptance and understanding, never benefitting from your misfortune and always seeking solutions by creating an ethical culture of support.

“Without “ethical culture” there is no salvation for humanity.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has encountered many people who wish to benefit from his Autism. Economically and emotionally benefit from what they perceive as his misfortune. Emotionally feel themselves superior to him and attempt to bully him into acting “normal”, attempt to drug him into being more “acceptable”. They attempt to use their prior (usually unsuccessful) experiences with other autistic people to force Joseph into ... not being Joseph. Some of these people are volunteers who deem themselves “well-meaning”, others are paid professionals. None of them are Joseph's friend. None of them create an ethical culture of love, acceptance, and understanding. None of them are welcome in Joseph's home.

“Joseph's Blessing”

143

*You can never be certain
until you've done it*

Not knowing is not a problem. Find out. Find out by asking questions and listening to the answers. Listening with an open mind and an open heart. Listen to those who agree with you, and especially to those who disagree. Listen, consider carefully, and ask more questions. Different questions. Different perspectives. Different answers. Become as certain as reasonably possible, and take action. Do it. Do it with certainty the first time ... and as many other times as necessary to reach a workable solution that is fair and beneficial to all.

*“Only those who attempt the absurd
can achieve the impossible.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph was uncertain that he could understand and contribute to Brother Basil's message. It truly seemed like attempting the absurd to achieve the impossible. And yet, here we are. You can never be certain until you've done it.

“Joseph's Blessing”

144

*Community is a choice,
not an assignment*

Choose your community wisely. Choose those who share your high ethical and moral standards. Choose those who seem different but are possessed of an open heart, an open mind, an empathic soul. Choose those who accept without judgment, understand without a personal agenda, and love without reservation. Choose a community where you are proud to be a member.

*On how he sees himself: “A person with no roots
anywhere ... a stranger everywhere.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has chosen the community that has sought his membership. Because he is differently abled, Joseph is a stranger in “normal” society, someone who never exactly “fits in”. Because he is differently abled, Joseph is welcomed by Brother Basil and the others as the perfect community member. Joseph’s community has chosen him. Joseph is where he “fits in”.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

145

Loneliness and emptiness are not the same

There is a media-driven idea that people should constantly be surrounded by other people. Constant interaction is deemed desirable. Privacy and personal space are denigrated as conditions to be endured until desirable partners are acquired. This is wrong-thinking. Privacy and personal space are valuable tools for self-fulfillment. Valuable for reflective thought, meditation, and planning. Valuable tools to re-charge the heart, the mind, and the soul.

“I am a real lone wolf who has never wholeheartedly belonged to the State, to my country, my circle of friends and not even to my family but who, despite all these bonds, has constantly experienced a feeling of strangeness and the need for solitude.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph prefers solitude. Joseph prefers to be alone to think and receive thoughts without outside world interference. He enjoys the silence and lack of interaction. Enjoys his own company more than the company of other people. When Joseph is physically alone, his soul is never empty.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

146

*It may not be the life
you imagined, but it's
the one you have*

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Are you that person? Even as an adult, you had plans for your future that never materialized because of changing circumstances and expectations. Do not mourn the loss of these dreams, they were not your path, not your life journey. There are no do-overs, only do-nows.

“The woman (person) who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The woman who walks alone is likely to find herself in places no one has ever been before.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Being autistic is not the life that Joseph would have chosen or imagined. Being the mother of an autistic son is not the life that I imagined or chose. But this is the life that we journey through together. This is the only path that we have. This is the path that we tread with open hearts and minds. This is our unique path where no one has ever been before, and it is extraordinary.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

Walk away from toxic drama

Keep balance and know your boundaries. What are your boundaries? Boundaries are your ethical standards, your personal space, your limit for invasive drama and pointless stupidity, the line that you refuse to cross. Before walking away, make every attempt to understand, accept, reason with, and love the source of the toxic drama. If you meet unreasonable resistance, if all sincere attempts fail, leave an opening for the future if change occurs, then walk away. You have done your best.

“The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has been the victim of toxic drama. People who refuse to love, accept, or understand. People who insist that autism is deliberate unacceptable behavior and not a physical disability. People who are convinced that Autism is contagious, demonic possession, or bad parenting. People who are toxically stupid. We choose the genius path, and walk away.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

148

*Forge a new path to what
is important and bring
light into the darkness*

What is important to you? Does it uphold moral standards and will it bring the light of understanding where there is presently darkness? Then that is your path. Go forward. Take those of an open heart and mind with you. Become a shining example of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“I lived in solitude in the country and noticed how the monotony of a quiet life stimulates the creative mind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph lives a quiet happy life, and he enjoys what other people view as monotony. Joseph welcomes routine but is not overly obsessive in his need for sameness. He just likes to know what to expect. When he is physically and emotionally comfortable, Joseph is the most receptive to communication.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

149

*Everyone walks their own
path and lives their own life*

Moments in time alter our entire lives. What moments altered your path? Analyze how and why. Remember, reflect, learn from the experience, but don't dwell there. Your life, your path, lies in the present and the future, not in past moments. Remember, reflect, learn and keep walking, you'll get there. Be patient and keep walking. You'll get to wherever it is that you're supposed to go.

*“Never mistake my disability for inability,
be patient, I'll get there.”*

ANONYMOUS

Giving birth to Joseph altered my path, altered my entire life, in innumerable positive ways. I have learned to see beyond functional disability. Learned the value of intuition and empathy. Learned to understand deeply and value the wisdom of my soul. Learned to accept without judgment or comparison. Learned to give and accept unconditional love. Learned many things beyond description or rational understanding. Learned to view the journey of life with an open mind and open heart.

“Joseph's Blessing”

150

Don't sweat the small stuff

How can you decide which stuff is “small” and which stuff is “big”? You cannot categorize in advance, it depends upon the circumstances at the time. Everything is “small stuff” depending upon your perspective. Depending upon your attitude. Be calm and optimistic in your approach to the unexpected. Positively resolve major issues, and there will be no need to sweat the small stuff.

“A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph never sweats the small stuff because his physical needs are always accommodated, and his empathic level of thought, meditation and communication is beyond categorization. His type of thinking is beyond worry, beyond “sweating” any kind of “stuff”.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

151

Our eyes tell us what we want to see, our souls tell us the truth

Look with your eyes, but think with your soul. See with your soul. Those who are unenlightened see the world through their own pre-conceived notions. They see the world through biased interpretation, with eyes and minds lacking in love, acceptance and understanding. They are the truly disabled. Help them. Help them to overcome the darkness in their souls. Teach them the meaning of an open mind and an open heart. Teach by example so that they may understand the message of love, acceptance, and understanding. Become a shining example of soul truth.

“As for the search for truth, I know from my own painful searching, with its many blind alleys, how hard it is to take a reliable step, be it ever so small, towards the understanding of that which is truly important.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph sees everyone, and every situation, with his soul. He has no pre-conceived notions or bias because his soul is pure. Joseph's life is a shining example of soul truth. A shining example of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

152

Change your perspective

Even when circumstances are beyond your control, you can positively control your reaction. You have control over your perspective. Positive perspective sees everything as a learning experience and seeks positive resolution. Positive perspective sees beyond the immediate circumstance and looks to a better future. A future of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“We should take care not to make the intellect our God; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph challenges the common perspective of human development. Autism limits his intellect but not his loving personality. Does this make him less of a person from a human perspective? No. Brother Basil loves Joseph because of his untainted intellect and extraordinary personality. His extraordinary soul.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

153

*Measure not by mistakes or
accomplishments, but by
what is done with them*

Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone has accomplishments. What do you do with yours? Do not dwell on your mistakes and allow them to overshadow your accomplishments. Look at your complete self from a positive perspective. Yes, you have made mistakes but they are part of your journey, your life experience. Yes, you have gained achievements, they are also part of your journey, your life experience. Use both to enhance your understanding, your value, your whole you. Use both to become an example of love, acceptance, and understanding.

*“Not everything that counts can be counted, and
not everything that can be counted counts.”*

SIGN IN ALBERT EINSTEIN’S OFFICE

Joseph makes mistakes. I make mistakes. But look at what we have accomplished by bringing the messages in this book to the world. Messages to create love, acceptance, and understanding. That’s what “counts”!

“Joseph’s Blessing”

154

*Don't seek crisis,
but don't run away*

If you draw an ethical line further and further away, allowing it to be continuously crossed, it becomes meaningless. Sometimes, you need to stand-your-ground. This doesn't mean that you should initiate conflict, but it does mean that you should have ethical and moral standards. It does mean that if you see a situation where your standards are violated, when you see injustice, don't just ignore it. Speak. Act. Don't run away.

*“One lives one's life under constant tension,
until it is time to go for good.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has been a victim, not of Autism, but of those people who see his autism as weakness and attempt to prey upon him. People filled with greed, and lust, and darkness in their souls. Joseph doesn't understand these people, his soul is so pure that he cannot comprehend evil, so he must be protected from them. An ethical line must be drawn that cannot be crossed. Joseph's protectors always stand-their-ground.

“Joseph's Blessing”

155

Only some people's opinions matter

Everyone has an opinion, on just about everything. All human relationships evolve and are never static. Opinions also evolve. Evolve over time and experience. Evolve due to changing circumstances. Evolve because life is not static. Who's opinion matters? The opinions of those you value, not necessarily those who agree with you. The opinions of those with high ethical and moral standards who sincerely believe that what they think is in your best interests. The opinions that you carefully consider and want to hear, even if you disagree.

*“The most pathetic person in the world is
someone who has sight but has no vision”*

HELEN KELLER

Many people have many opinions about Joseph, and Joseph has many opinions about them. Opinions regarding “what to do about his Autism”. Opinions about the latest treatments, the latest “cure”. Good-hearted opinions by well-meaning people discussing Joseph's perceived inadequacies. His disability. His defects. Joseph listens and forms a defective self-opinion. I have a rule: If you're going to voice an uncomplimentary opinion about Joseph, tell me privately and not in front of him. He doesn't need to hear your opinion, even if you sincerely feel that I do.

“Joseph's Blessing”

156

*Some thoughts are
better left unspoken*

Constructive debate and disagreement produce positive new ideas. Think before you speak. Is what you're about to say truly "constructive", or is it truly criticism? What is constructive? A reasonable, workable, practical suggestion. A plan for future action. A recounting of relevant experience. A graciously presented thought that should not be left unspoken.

"A clever person solves a problem. A wise person avoids it."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Brother Basil imparts wisdom to avoid problems, and solve the problems that already exist. Brother Basil's gracious messages must never be left unspoken. Messages of love, acceptance, and understanding.

"Joseph's Blessing"

157

*Circumstances change,
and we choose how to
change in response*

Before responding to changed circumstances: think. Think about what has changed, and why. Think about your response to the reactions of others, and think about their anticipated response to you. Do not respond in emotional haste, wait until you are capable of a calm, reasoned response. How you choose to change, how you choose to respond, is up to you.

“Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

When circumstances change, Joseph waits to gauge his response according to the response of those around him. He watches until he determines how the change impacts him, and what he can do about it. If Joseph cannot do anything about the change, he becomes passive and attempts to accommodate those around him to the very best of his abilities.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

158

*People label negatively what
they don't understand*

Respect everyone equally, those on a pedestal look down. Be certain that you are not the person looking down on others from a pedestal. No person is less than you. Instead of assigning a negative label, seek to understand. Accommodate, and accept, differences. Your life will be enriched by letting go of your own disability: your preconceptions about the relative worth of other people. Label positively and create a positive experience.

*“Those without a disability are often times more
disabled than those with a disability.”*

ANONYMOUS

People label Joseph negatively, seeing only his Autism and not the extraordinary person underneath the symptoms. They don't understand that Autism is a physical, functional, disability. Autism does not negatively label Joseph's soul.

“Joseph's Blessing”

159

*To not say something
is saying something,
denounce what is evil*

Speak your truth. Speak the universal truth of ethical and moral standards. Speak the truth even if it is unpopular, dangerous, and radical. Carefully consider the impact of your words and actions to avoid unintended consequences. Communicate clearly and answer questions to avoid miscommunication. Never use sarcasm, or humor, people take it literally. Inspire others to speak and take action, evil thrives when those who see it do nothing.

*“The world is not dangerous because of those who do harm
but because of those who look at it without doing anything.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Denounce those who take advantage of people like Joseph. Joseph who would have no voice without the care of those around him. Fight for the disabled, the disadvantaged, for those who cannot fight for themselves. Fight because it is morally and ethically right. Make the world a less dangerous place. Speak your truth.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

160

People often don't want you to be more successful than them

Some people are envious, even if someone else's success does not come at their expense. These people have low self-esteem and lack emotional development. They lack empathy. They see the world, and other people, in terms of avarice and desire to steal your success. They refuse to see with their soul, with an open mind, with an open heart. They are not good people, and they are not your friends.

“The ordinary objects of human endeavor - property, outward success, luxury - have always seemed to me contemptible.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

People are envious of Joseph's successful communication with Brother Basil and the others. They are envious of his Grandmother's protection and unconditional love. Envious that their souls are so closed that they cannot share, cannot hear, cannot understand. Envious that Joseph is more successful than them.

“Joseph's Blessing”

161

*Pursue excellence
in all possibilities*

Not merely excellence in outward pursuits, pursue excellence in the very fiber of your being. Teach others through your example. Understand that what you say and do matters. You are an integral part of someone else's journey, be an excellent role model. Be excellent in your soul and encourage others in the same pursuit.

*“Try not to become a man (person) of success
but rather to become a man of value.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is certainly a person of value. Joseph, and Brother Basil, have been excellent role models in the pursuit of that which really matters, the pursuit of an excellent soul.

“Joseph's Blessing”

162

*Become a living book of lessons
for those who seek your counsel*

Become an example of love, acceptance, and understanding. Become a role model and graciously teach others to become their best selves. People will seek your counsel, your opinion, when they discover the excellence of your soul. Your open heart and mind will lead them to a better path, a better life journey.

*“The example of great and pure individuals is the only
thing that can lead us to noble thoughts and deeds.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Brother Basil is a great and pure individual who graciously blesses all with noble thoughts and deeds. Blesses Joseph with the ability to communicate. Blesses me with the ability to listen.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

163

Preconceptions fade with discovery of purpose

Everyone has preconceptions, pre-conceived notions, about other people, the world, and about how-things-should-be. This is not necessarily wrong, preconceptions assist in giving order to chaos and they provide foundational thoughts from which to proceed. It is wrong to cling irrationally to preconceptions once a different truth is revealed. It is wrong to refuse to modify, refuse to understand, refuse to accept that your preconceptions are biased and untrue. It is wrong to refuse to look for the proverbial needle in the haystack because you know in your heart that it will prove your preconceptions to be wrong. Open your mind. Open your heart.

*“Most people stop looking when they find the
proverbial needle in the haystack. I would continue
looking to see if there were other needles.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has encountered those who have unfavorable preconceptions about autistic people. Therefore, they have unfavorable preconceptions about Joseph. They refuse to look beyond the outward symptoms. The functional inability. They refuse to acknowledge the soul inside because it conflicts with their preconceived notions about disabled people. Conflicts with their preconception of their own superiority over anyone different.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

164

*Don't tell people what to do,
let them think it's their idea*

Criticism without constructive graciousness is disguised rudeness. Never be rude. Always treat others in the manner that you wish to be treated. Give compassion to your critics because they need to learn by your example. Your example of love, acceptance, and understanding. Your example of discussing, not demanding, an alternate course of action. Your example of allowing others to reach the same conclusions as you as a happy coincidence, not a product of criticism. Your example of consensus building.

“Coincidence is God’s way of remaining anonymous.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph takes all criticism to heart as an indication that he is bad, stupid, and unable. He is none of the above. This rudeness is inexcusable. Joseph needs to be graciously assisted and taught when his functional inabilities are an issue. Brother Basil always graciously assists and teaches, never criticizes.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

165

*You must begin the journey
to successfully finish it*

Every life has a journey, a path with many experiences and responses. A journey into the unknown. A journey that must be undertaken with courage and enthusiasm, even though you may be frightened to go forward. You have no choice. You cannot go back, and you cannot stay the same, you must move forward down the path of your life. This is good. This is the way to attract wisdom through experience. Even if the experience itself is negative, learn from it and go forward to a success. Finish every journey with the success of wisdom.

*“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but
of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is open to new experiences, but he is frightened of failure. Frightened of disappointing those around him. Frightened of being judged incompetent. New experiences need to be introduced slowly, gently, and kindly. The Autism journey is long, the path is hard, and patience is required to experience wisdom and success.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

166

*Judging by comparison is
judging by perception, not truth*

It is a human trait to make comparisons about ourselves and others, but it is not necessary to publicize these comparisons, especially if they are unfavorable. Always be gracious and kind. Respect the privacy of others when making comparisons, and expect privacy in return. Comparisons are not truth, they are perceptions based upon preconceived notions of what-should-be. Opinions not fact. Keep them to yourself.

“Your disability will never make God love you less.”

ANONYMOUS

Disability creates comparison. Comparison to what is “normal”. Joseph understands this. He understands that he is not “normal”, but that doesn’t make him less of a person. Less valuable. Less human. Autism makes him different, not less by comparison.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

167

Knowing the future is not a human gift

Would you like to know your future? No. Knowing your future would taint your present and ruin the experiences, lessons, and wisdom along your life journey. Your path is unknown because it isn't "set" and definite. You have decisions and choices to make. Decisions and choices that change your path, change your trajectory to success, change your journey. Decisions and choices based upon the intuition of your soul. Decisions and choices based upon your prior experiences and gained wisdom. Decisions and choices that create your future as you journey forward.

"The only real valuable thing is intuition."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph sometimes makes intuitive decisions and choices dictated by his Autism that seem strange to outsiders. Seem not "normal", but there's always a physical reason. A physical need to alleviate discomfort, even if the action looks more uncomfortable. Even if the action looks self-injurious to outsiders, it's blocking a greater discomfort. Joseph makes decisions and choices to the best of his ability and needs to be gently studied and questioned to find out what can be done to help. Sometimes, Joseph's answer is "just leave me alone, there's nothing that I need and I'm coping the best that I can", and that's a valid answer, a valid choice, to be respected.

"Joseph's Blessing"

168

*Emanating love, peace,
and joy is contagious,
seek those in the light*

Darkness is also contagious, consciously seek the light. Make a conscious decision to teach as a good example of love, acceptance, and understanding. Answer questions graciously. Accept people who are sincere in their journey, and will teach others. Be conscious of your position as a role model to others. A role model to bring the light of love, peace, and joy into the future. Live for others, and your life will be worth living.

*“I believe in one thing, that only a life lived
for others is a life worth living.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Brother Basil is devoted to teaching the goals of love, acceptance, and understanding. Joseph consciously emanates light for others to follow.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

169

*The grass isn't greener on
the other side, it's an illusion
based on your perceptions*

What do you see when you look at someone else? Do you judge them? Yes. Do they judge you? Yes. Research indicates that you form an impression about someone, and they about you, within the first sixty seconds after introduction, and that this impression forms your perception of their character. One minute that could alter the trajectory of your journey, your experiences, your path. Consciously present yourself so that this one minute is favorable and a true indication of you.

“Disability does not mean inability.”

ANONYMOUS

Without additional information, without love, acceptance, and understanding, Joseph's “one minute” impression will be tainted by Autism. Outsiders will see his functional disability, and he will see their reaction to him. Look further, past the disability. Look further than one minute for everyone. Look further because you would like them to look further at you.

“Joseph's Blessing”

170

*Actively participate in
your destiny and change
your chosen path*

Who chose your path? You. Why? Because it seemed the best choice under the circumstances at the time. Have circumstances changed? Yes. Actively participate in your destiny and change your path. Consciously decide to analyze the situation and choose your actions based upon experience, the intuition of your soul, and your ethical standards. Determine if your “facts” are indeed facts, or opinions based upon outdated information. Actively participate in your own life.

“If the “facts” don’t fit the theory, change the facts.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Before he could communicate, Joseph had little control over his own life. He couldn’t refuse a situation or indicate a preference even if he wanted to. Joseph actively participates in his own life.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

171

*What has been learned
is no longer unknown,
and can be passed on*

It is your duty, your path, to teach others this journey of love, acceptance, and understanding. You have been given this knowledge, this experience, so that you may become a role model. So that you may become a shining example of light in a world turning towards darkness. So that you can make a conscious, positive difference. So that your life will be of value to others, and to yourself.

“Never regard your study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn the liberating beauty of the intellect for your own personal joy and for the profit of the community to which your later work will belong.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph enjoys learning Brother Basil’s message. He enjoys having the empathic ability to communicate clearly and he also consciously enjoys helping others as he has been helped.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

172

*Inspire gossip, let people talk
while you get things done*

Never disseminate, or engage with, malicious gossip. If the gossip negatively impacts you, and it is spreading unabated, respond with calm rationality. Respond to malicious gossip with love, acceptance, and understanding. Respond to malicious gossip by creating favorable gossip. People are interested in you because you are extraordinary. They desire to follow you and discover your “secrets” to an open heart and mind. They want to talk and speculate about you. They seek answers to long-term problems. Inspire good gossip to distract and redirect their intrusive interest. Inspire good gossip so that you can work on solving problems and getting things done.

*“It’s not that I’m so smart,
it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

People gossip about Joseph and his relationship with Brother Basil. They’re scared to ask Brother Basil or Joseph directly, and they’re embarrassed to ask me, so they ask each other questions that only Brother Basil and Joseph know the answer to. This creates speculation which leads to gossip. Brother Basil hears the gossip, and responds appropriately.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

173

*To be extraordinary,
don't do the ordinary*

You are not meant to be ordinary. Ordinary people do what everyone else is doing. Ordinary acts without questioning “why”. Acts without understanding. Acts without acceptance of unique human differences. Acts only for themselves. You are extraordinary. You live your life with creative intelligence, always asking “why”. You have ethical and moral standards. You live your life with an open mind and an open heart. You live a life of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Creativity is intelligence having fun.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is extraordinary in ways that ordinary people cannot understand. In ways that ordinary people cannot comprehend because they lack creative intelligence. Ordinary lacks soul vision and comprehends only the outward, the physically obvious. Joseph doesn't understand ordinary people, and they don't understand him.

“Joseph's Blessing”

174

*Stereotypes are perpetuated
lies, form your own opinions*

Stereotypes are perpetuated by people who have no actual experience with the subject of their prejudice. Deliberately insulated people who fear real life interaction with “the other”. Why fear? Because they fear the exposure of their deep-seated prejudices as lies. Because they “know” in their subconscious that the stereotype isn’t true, but they cling to it as a way to feel superior to another. People who perpetuate stereotypes are bullies with closed hearts and minds. Call them out and teach them the path of tolerance.

*“Common sense is the collection of
prejudices acquired by age 18.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph frequently encounters prejudice. Prejudice against “the disabled” as being less than human, living less than valuable lives, being a burden to society. Brother Basil disables prejudice by teaching tolerance. By teaching messages of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

175

*Running away from problems
doesn't solve them, but you can
walk down the path of hope*

You cannot merely ignore or run away from your problems, they must be faced with courage and determination. Faced with the wisdom of experience and a mind open to possibilities. Faced with an open heart and a strong soul.

“I have a disability. Yes, that’s true, but all it really means is I may have to take a slightly different path than you.”

ANONYMOUS

Joseph faces the problem of Autism with courage and determination. He cannot run from or ignore his Autism, it is a part of who he is, but he can accept and go forward down a slightly different path. Joseph always walks the path of hope and does his very best.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

176

Never ignore your conscience

Your conscience is your ethical and moral standards. Consciously make certain that your standards are high. Your conscience informs your soul. Your conscience is who you are, and what you will become. When your conscience speaks, always listen. Always follow. Always act in accordance with your extraordinary self. Always act in accordance with love, acceptance, and understanding. Never act against your conscience. Never act against your soul.

*“Never do anything against conscience,
even if the state demands it.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has a pure conscience because he has a pure soul. He would never deliberately harm anyone. Brother Basil has a pure conscience because he is a pure soul of protection and wisdom.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

177

There is positive in every negative situation, and negative in every positive

Sometimes, the thing you dread is the thing you must do. Go forward with courage and determination. Go forward with a clear conscience and a realistic plan. Go forward because others are depending upon you. Go forward because you must. Look to the positive as a learning experience. Overcome the fools and gain wisdom. Gain wisdom to turn a negative into a positive. Gain wisdom to succeed, and move on.

“There is a race between mankind and the universe. Mankind is trying to build bigger, better, faster and more foolproof machines. The universe is trying to build bigger, better, and faster fools. So far the universe is winning.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph dreads being judged on the basis of his Autism, but he carefully and hesitantly will interact with other people. Interact with those who understand that although Autism is a negative situation, Joseph’s soul is the positive. Joseph will interact with people who interact with him on the basis of love, acceptance, and understanding. Joseph will interact with people who are not fools.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

178

*No misdeed is a valid
means to an end*

Never act dishonestly, violently, against conscience, even if it seems like an expedient short-cut to a noble end. There are no valid short-cuts to success. Step-by-step, building a solid and worthy foundation for the future, is the only legitimate path. If the misdeed is accidental, correct your mistake with courage and determination. Straighten your path and correct inadvertent misdeeds before you journey forward.

*“Force always attracts men (people) of low morality,
and I believe it to be an invariable rule that tyrants
of genius are succeeded by scoundrels.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph makes expectation mistakes, but he never makes conscious misdeeds. Joseph cannot act dishonestly because his soul is pure and innocent of immorality.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

179

*Always ask questions and
carefully consider the answers*

As you teach by example, be open to questions and carefully consider your answers. Ask questions in return, and carefully consider the response. Listen with understanding. Listen with patience. Ask for clarification. Listen again, and again, before answering. Listen, and respond, with an open mind. Listen, and respond, with an open heart.

*“You have to learn the rules of the game. And then
you have to play better than anyone else.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has difficulty playing the “normal game” because he doesn’t understand the “rules”. Because he doesn’t understand the game, he has difficulty asking questions. Brother Basil and Madelyn understand Joseph’s soul and provide answers to questions that haven’t been asked. Answers to questions that neither Joseph, nor I, knew to ask.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

180

*A regularly scheduled day of
rest and relaxation is both
healthy and necessary*

Your support system is your emergency team, call them for a day of rest and relaxation as needed. The hectic demands of modern society dismiss rest and relaxation as laziness. This is wrong. Your soul needs time to relax, to meditate, to rest. During your life journey, your soul resides in your body which also needs rest and relaxation. Take time to enjoy your life.

“The idle man (person) does not know what it is to enjoy rest.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

In between communications, Joseph spends his days resting and relaxing in meditative thought. Joseph enjoys solitude, enjoys the quiet privacy of his own company, and doesn't encourage intrusion into his personal time.

“Joseph's Blessing”

181

*Find fault with yourself before
finding fault in others*

If you must find fault with someone, find fault with yourself. Fault yourself for being judgmental. Fault yourself for being harsh and critical. Fault yourself for negatively judging yourself. Change your own path to a positive journey of love, acceptance, and understanding, for yourself and others.

*“Whoever undertakes to set himself (herself)
up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is
shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

When people are critical of Joseph, he finds fault with himself. Fault with himself because he believes their criticism. Unjustified fault that he remembers in his heart. Be patient, and if you must be critical and judgmental, say it privately to me, not in front of Joseph.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

182

Human nature tells a good story, have the patience to listen

Do not disavow your human nature, it is a positive part of your soul. Be patient with yourself and make sensible use of your human needs, desires, and inclinations. Listen to yourself, and to others, with empathy and love. All types of humans inhabit the earth, reach out.

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.”

MARCUS AURELIUS

Joseph’s human nature is a different path because of his Autism, but it is still a positive part of his soul. A positive part of who he is, and who he will become.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

183

*It isn't fair because fairness
is a human perception,
not a part of reality*

Children indignantly scream “not fair” on the playground when it isn't their turn. Do you indignantly scream “not fair” in real life? Why isn't it “fair”? Because the outcome doesn't suit you? Your world view is your perception of how-things-should-be. Is your perception egotistical? Change your perception of “fairness” so that you consider moral fairness to all humanity, not just fairness to you.

“The destiny of civilized humanity depends more than ever on the moral forces it is capable of generating.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

It isn't “fair” that Joseph has Autism and “normal” people get to live easier lives. Easier to be fully functional and not dependent upon others. Easier to communicate needs, and wants, and “not fair” opinions with your external voice and not only to those capable of listening empathically. Is this Joseph's perception? No. Brother Basil's perception? No. They perceive that being able to empathically communicate wisdom is “not fair” to those who cannot hear the message. Those with closed hearts and minds who are unwilling to participate in the moral forces of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

184

*To be better for another
requires your best self*

Always be your best self for yourself, and for others. What is your best self? When you listen with an open heart and an open mind. When you perceive and encourage the goodness, the light of the soul, in yourself and others. When you perceive and understand that darkness resides in every soul, and bring that darkness to the light. Your best self is a persistent example of love, acceptance, and understanding. Your best self transforms the spirit of the times.

*“Each of us has to do his little bit toward
transforming this spirit of the times.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph is always his best self for himself, and for others. He has no bias, no pre-conceived notions of darkness, his soul is filled with the pure innocence of light and goodness.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

185

*Souls cannot be broken,
they find a path*

Your soul is who you are on the deepest personal level of thought and understanding. Your soul contains the essence of your character, compassion, memory, consciousness, and perception. Your soul is your light, and your projection to others so that they may learn from your light. Circumstances may be difficult, but a strong soul cannot be broken. Your soul will find its path, and lead others.

“I want to know God’s thoughts; the rest are details.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph has an extraordinary soul filled with light and wisdom. His autistic circumstances are difficult, but his soul remains unbroken as he leads humanity down the path of love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

186

*When you risk being broken,
you become unbreakable*

How do you know that your soul cannot be broken? Because circumstances have attempted to break you, you have accepted the risks, and emerged stronger. Emerged stronger and more resolute in your path. More resolute to teach and to lead other souls to love, acceptance, and understanding. Your soul is strong in your light, in your strength of character, and you will not break.

“A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph risks being broken by the burden of Autism every moment of every day. He risks this burden, and his soul triumphs. Joseph’s soul cannot be broken because he is resolute in his journey. Joseph’s soul cannot be enveloped in the darkness of defeat.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

187

*You can influence others, but
you are not responsible for them*

People who offer to help you cheat are not to be trusted even if they appear to be your friends, your allies. They may not be pathological criminals, but they are not of good character and will “turn” on you in the future. Refuse to cheat. Set an example by taking the path of truth. Teach moral and ethical standards by your good example. Take responsibility for influencing others to act with love, acceptance, and understanding.

“I have known a vast quantity of nonsense talked about bad men not looking you in the face. Don’t trust that conventional idea. Dishonesty will stare honestly out of countenance any day in the week, if there is anything to be got by it.”

CHARLES DICKENS

Joseph is incapable of cheating. Brother Basil speaks truth and wisdom and protects Joseph from harm. All of us, both Spirit and living, protect Joseph from people who would attempt to cheat him.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

188

*Stumbling and falling
isn't failure, it's a sign
of moving forward*

If you never attempt something new, never create a blessing to mankind with your mind, never act or take a risk, you will be safe. You will never risk failure, but you will also never know your true potential, never know success.

“Concern for man and his fate must always form the chief objective of all endeavors ... in order that the creations of our minds shall be a blessing and not a curse to mankind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph's attempts to functionally move forward past his Autism are sometimes unsuccessful. He psychologically stumbles and falls, but this isn't failure. He patiently tries again, and again, and again, because attempts are part of the learning process, part of moving forward.

“Joseph's Blessing”

189

*Challenging yourself should
not become overwhelming*

Challenge yourself gradually, building upon each success, step-by-step. In the same manner that you physically exercise your body, taking into account your overall condition and stamina, exercise your soul. Keep stretching. Keep expanding your wisdom and your capabilities. Learn from others of valuable wisdom. Become a person of valuable wisdom and teach. Debate. Discuss. Set an example of ethical and moral standards as a foundation for challenging, and making sense of, the “world madhouse”.

“This world is a strange madhouse.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph resists becoming overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by physical demands he cannot accommodate. Overwhelmed by Autism “experts” who insist upon a set protocol. Overwhelmed by those who cannot, or will not, communicate with an open mind and an open heart.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

190

*The brain grows when
used and challenged*

Use your brain, your mind, to observe the world around you. Observe the actions, and reactions, of other people. Observe your own actions and reactions. Use your brain, your mind, to inform your soul. Use your brain, your mind, to form high ethical and moral standards. Form new ideas. Gather intellectual experience. Listen to your intuition, and act. Act. Teach. Become a role model.

“A new idea comes suddenly and in a rather intuitive way, but intuition is nothing but the outcome of earlier intellectual experience.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph challenges his brain everyday. Challenges his brain to process functionality. Challenges his brain to process communication. Challenges his brain to grow.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

191

*Make things happen, don't
just let them happen*

Live your life consciously. When circumstances change, when new situations occur, analyze and adapt. Adapt without compromising your ethical and moral standards. Adapt without allowing darkness to creep into your soul. Change your perspective and refuse to be a victim. Prevent difficulties, if possible, and intellectually solve problems that cannot be prevented. Intellectually solve with an open mind and open heart.

*“There are no problems we cannot solve together,
and very few that we can solve by ourselves.”*

L.B. JOHNSON

Things happen to Joseph because of his Autism. Functionality difficulties happen. Joseph always tries to solve the problem before seeking assistance. Always tries to adapt. Joseph refuses to be a victim of his Autism.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

192

*“Proven facts” are
often unproven*

Have you accepted as “fact” statements, ideas, that are actually opinions? Facts that aren’t really facts but they have become familiar to you and seem valid? Do they make you uncertain, uncomfortable? Familiar discomfort is easier than unfamiliar possibility. Consciously examine your reality. Consciously examine all of the possibilities, all of the possible paths for your journey. Think about your comfort zone, and expand beyond it.

“As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Before Brother Basil enhanced his understanding of himself, Joseph accepted the “facts” about his Autism level foisted upon him by “experts”. Joseph now sees positive possibilities.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

193

*Doing what's right
is never wrong*

How do you know right from wrong? Look to your ethical and moral standards. Look to your soul. Do not be impressed by, or follow, what others are doing even if it's popular. Even if it's generally accepted and dissension has penalties. Do not follow blindly against conscience even when actions appear scientific and bear a high-sounding name. Follow your conscience and teach others to follow theirs. Be an example, a role model, for what is right.

*“One must shy away from questionable undertakings,
even when they bear a high-sounding name.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Recommendations have been made concerning Autism “cures” that violate moral and ethical standards. Violate the human value of those afflicted. Questionable science that causes potential damage. Questionable “experts” with profit motives. Joseph is not an experimental lab animal, he is a human being of extraordinary value. Consciously and carefully consider right from wrong.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

194

*Only those willing to
learn can be taught*

Always attempt to teach and be a role model of love, acceptance and understanding. Welcome questions. Answer with the empathy of understanding, even when not necessarily in agreement. Some people will refuse to listen. Refuse to listen with an open heart and mind. Do not become infuriated by their refusal, it is not yet their path. Teach others, and renew your offer to teach those who refused. The offer of wisdom should always be made available for when it can be welcomed.

“Any fool can know. The point is to understand.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph doesn't know many common functional skills, but he understands empathy. He understands that all people are of value and has patience for those who eventually will learn Brother Basil's wisdom. Joseph understands the important lessons.

“Joseph's Blessing”

195

You must understand a problem to solve it

Everyone has problems, and everyone's story is important. What types of problems are you encountering at this stage of your journey, and how does your life story help you to overcome them? Consciously tell yourself a positive life story filled with understanding. Understanding of your physical and emotional needs, and of the physical and emotional needs of others. Understanding of your relationship to others, and of their relationship to you. Conscious understanding of what needs to be done for positive resolution. Conscious positive communication of options, of recommendations, of problem solutions.

*“Most people spend more time and energy going
around problems than in trying to solve them.”*

HENRY FORD

Joseph has physical difficulties, but his problems are caused by other people. Judgmental people. People lacking in love, acceptance and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

196

We fear what we don't understand

What do you fear? Heights? Snakes? People who are different? People who aren't like you? To them, you are the one who is different. Should you be feared or understood? Approach each new person as a positive relationship. As a potential new friend. Discover what you have in common, and learn from your differences. Each new relationship shifts your path, and impacts your journey. Each new relationship is an opportunity to imagine something better. Each new relationship is a positive opportunity for love, acceptance, and understanding.

“The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

Joseph views new relationships with hesitation until their positive potential is proven by approaching him with an open attitude. Approaching non-judgmentally. Approaching with love, acceptance, and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

197

Protect the abused, not the abuser

Protect the abused, and do not become the abuser. Actively protect, silence is complicity, but make certain of the situation. Ask questions. Have you imposed your own standards and jumped to unwarranted conclusions? Is your perception of abuse correct? Your prior experiences, your attitude, your personal perceptions determine your judgment of any situation. Be non-judgmental and maintain a positive attitude until certain of the abuse situation.

*“Compassion and tolerance are not a sign
of weakness, but a sign of strength.”*

DALAI LAMA

Joseph has periodic bouts of self-injurious behavior caused by his Autism. He isn't angry, or frustrated, or in any way abused or psychologically impaired. Self-injurious behavior (for example: head banging) is a physical autistic reaction. No one knows how to cure it. No one, including Joseph, knows the reason, although he has communicated that hitting his own head makes the “buzzing stop”. Joseph physically looks abused after a self-injurious episode, but he isn't. Ask questions before jumping to conclusions.

“Joseph's Blessing”

198

*Respect all belief systems
that value honesty, loyalty
and compassion*

Be certain that your own belief system values honesty, loyalty and compassion. Whatever name you call God, we are all humans on the journey of life, and all human paths intersect and are woven together. Any belief system that teaches intolerance is false and damaging to the soul. Follow love, acceptance, and understanding.

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

People are people, no matter what their beliefs. Look to the goodness of their soul, not to the labeling of their faith. Joseph and Brother Basil are accepting and tolerant of everyone, looking only at the soul.

“Joseph’s Blessing”

199

Listen with understanding

If you don't understand, ask questions, and be non-judgmental when listening to the answers. Still don't understand? Ask the question differently for clarification. Engage in dialogue. Seek commonalities. Have the type of empathy that seeks understanding not necessarily agreement, and expect empathy in return. Listen with an open heart and mind. Listen until you understand.

*“If you can't explain it simply,
you don't understand it well enough.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph listens carefully ... to everything and everyone. Joseph listens empathically with his soul. Although he doesn't always understand the literal meaning of words, Joseph always understands a message of love, acceptance and understanding.

“Joseph's Blessing”

200

Listen, quietly, to your soul

This is perhaps the most important of Brother Basil's messages. Listen to your conscience. Listen to your ethical and moral standards. Listen to your intuition. Listen with understanding. Listen with positive thoughts and actions. Listen to your soul.

"God always takes the simplest way."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Joseph always listens with his soul. With empathy. With hope. With love, acceptance, and understanding.

"Joseph's Blessing"

As a final message of wisdom, Brother Basil sends these words from Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

“People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends, and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway. If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway. What you spent years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway. Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway. In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”

“Joseph’s Blessing”

