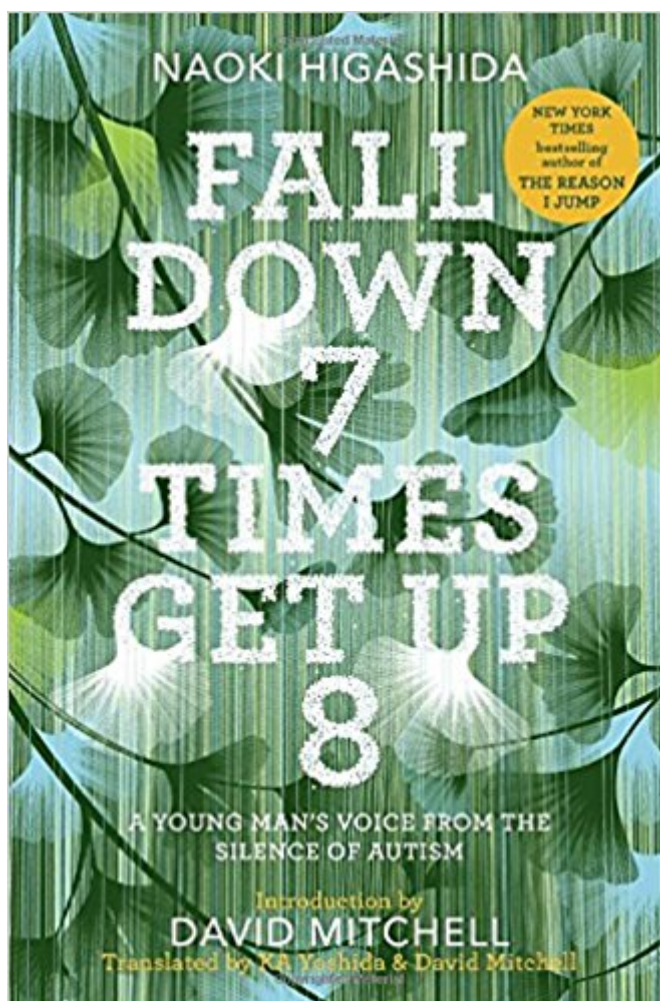


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# Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8: A Young Man's Voice From The Silence Of Autism



## Synopsis

From the author of the bestselling *The Reason I Jump*, an extraordinary self-portrait of life as a young adult with autism Naoki Higashida was only thirteen when he wrote *The Reason I Jump*, a revelatory account of autism from the inside by a nonverbal Japanese child, which became an international success. Now he shares his thoughts and experiences as a twenty-four-year-old man living each day with severe autism. In short, powerful chapters, Higashida explores school memories, family relationships, the exhilaration of travel, and the difficulties of speech. He also allows readers to experience profound moments we take for granted, like the thought-steps necessary for him to register that it's raining outside. Acutely aware of how strange his behavior can appear to others, he aims throughout to foster a better understanding of autism and to encourage society to see people with disabilities as people, not as problems. With an introduction by bestselling novelist David Mitchell, *Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8* also includes a dreamlike short story Higashida wrote especially for this edition. Both moving and of practical use, this book opens a window into the mind of an inspiring young man who meets every challenge with tenacity and good humor. However often he falls down, he always gets back up. Praise for *Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8*

“[Naoki Higashida's] success as a writer now transcends his diagnosis. . . . His relative isolation with words as his primary connection to the outside world has allowed him to fully develop the powers of observation that are necessary for good writing, and he has developed rich, deep perspectives on ideas that many take for granted. . . . The diversity of Higashida's writing, in both subject and style, fits together like a jigsaw puzzle of life put in place with humor and thoughtfulness.”

—The Japan Times

“Profound insights about what the struggle of living with autism is really like . . . Once again, the invitation to step inside Higashida's mind is irresistible.”

—London Evening Standard

“Naoki Higashida's lyrical and heartfelt account of his condition is a gift to anyone involved with the same challenges. . . . Higashida shows a delicate regard for the difficulties his condition creates . . . and is adept at explaining his experiences in language that makes sense to neurotypicals.”

—The Guardian

“Wise and witty, [*Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8*] offers a second insider's insight into the mysteries of non-verbal autism—but this time from the vantage point of a young adult. . . . Moving . . . Higashida's reflections are at times refreshingly hard-nosed [and] his self-awareness is uplifting.”

—Financial Times

“[Naoki Higashida's] thoughtful, syntactically complex writing puts the lie to the already dubious characterization of such individuals as low-functioning.”

—Toronto Star

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Random House (July 11, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812997395

ISBN-13: 978-0812997392

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 0.9 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #19,530 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Children's Health > Autism & Asperger's Syndrome](#) #23 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Special Needs > Disabilities](#) #55 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical](#)

## Customer Reviews

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and Yoshida's deft translation, Higashida conveys this isolating mindset and his yearnings for connection and self-expression, in direct, evocative prose •his compulsive, restless motion, he writes, is instinctual, like a wild animal running over a wide plain that provides readers with a window into a previously unknowable world. Publishers Weekly "Illuminating . . . Higashida writes with confidence about his many interests, including nature and mathematics, and the immutable beauties of autism, and he reckons himself lucky to be wired as he is. . . . Autism is a mysterious neurological condition. . . . Higashida gives us a thoughtful view of the art of living well in its shadow. "Kirkus Reviews "Higashida's accounts of thinking in images, feeling compelled to make repetitive movements and the difficulties and pleasures of communicating make this book totally captivating. . . . Readers will find this older Higashida not only eloquent and thoughtful, but also wise, measured and, most of all, kind. "BookPage "Readers open to the benefits of differences, including neurodiversity, will feel grateful that Higashida can use a typewriter-like alphabet grid to communicate and share his inner life in this can-do memoir. "Booklist "Now that Naoki Higashida is a young adult, he has developed rich inner thoughts and he strives to learn more about the world around him. Until he was able to communicate with his alphabet grid, his loneliness was agony. He begs teachers and others who work with special-needs individuals to provide opportunities to learn and grow. A sheltered life is not paradise. Naoki maintains that to avoid impairment of personal development, he must have contact with some of the hardships other people endure. This book is essential reading for parents and teachers of those with autism who remain nonverbal. "Temple Grandin, author of *The Autistic Brain* and *Thinking in Pictures* "Compelling insight on every single page, gently challenging assumptions you didn't even know you held on how others should process the social and physical environments around us. "Ellen Notbohm, author of *Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew*

Naoki Higashida was born in Kimitsu, Japan, in 1992. Diagnosed with severe autism when he was five, he subsequently learned to communicate using a handmade alphabet grid and began to write poems and short stories. At the age of thirteen he wrote *The Reason I Jump*, which was published in Japan in 2007. Its English translation came out in 2013, and it has now been published in more than thirty languages. Higashida has since published several books in Japan, including

children's books and picture books, poems, and essays. The subject of an award-winning Japanese television documentary in 2014, he continues to give presentations throughout the country about his experience of autism. ~ ~ ~ David Mitchell is the author of seven novels, including Cloud Atlas, The Bone Clocks, and, most recently, Slade House. KA Yoshida was born in Yamaguchi, Japan, and specialized in English poetry at Notre Dame Seishin University. KA Yoshida and David Mitchell live in Ireland with their two children.

Very well written. Nice to have a different point of view. I think everyone should read it.

Very interesting book that I have used a lot in my tutoring on Autism. I thank Naoki for writing it.

Very insightful about autistic behaviors.

I must admit I have owned the previous book by this author, "The Reason I Jump" for several years and haven't read it. I have a daughter with low-functioning, low verbal autism, and something in me wanted to feel very sure that the writing was truly the thoughts of the author before I read the book. When I was preparing to review this second book, I first went back and read the first one, and was quite blown away by all the insight I gained into the mind of a person like my daughter. The second book, like the first, is translated by David Mitchell, and I found his introduction very informative. He talked about the methodology Naoki Higashida used to write both books, and I understand now that I am truly getting a glimpse into the mind of someone with much to teach me. I have the bad habit of folding over pages of a book that I want to especially remember or note, and this book has many folded pages! Just a few of the helpful insights I gained---why my daughter always wants a Band-Aid on any minor injury, but then takes it right off, how important it is to keep working on making my daughter able to communicate with everyone, not just those willing to try hard to do so, how often when my daughter is given a choice and chooses one item, it's not really what she wants, and it's frustrating to her when it's not realized that she doesn't really prefer the chosen item, how the urge to recreate sequences of events can make her need to keep doing things we've told her not to do, even though part of the sequence is us getting upset, how it's important to not assume those with special needs are happy or satisfied with their lives just because they don't have a way to tell us they aren't....I could go on like this for hours. I don't know if my daughter will ever find a way to communicate her thoughts as well as Naoki does, and as he points out, each person with autism is an individual and her thoughts might be very different than his, but I am so grateful to him for the

work it takes him to let the world know what he is thinking. I know I'm going to change quite a few things in my approach to my daughter based on his help, and I hope he knows what good he is doing with his writing.

Higashida is on the spectrum; he was nonverbal for a long time and even today he struggles with expressing himself verbally; he has what he calls restricted speech. He finds it easier many times to use his computer or a spelling board to communicate. When he was thirteen he wrote his first book, *The Reason I Jump*, to try and explain some of his actions to neurotypical folks. His new book, written as a 24 year old, takes that further, telling us what it's like to live in his world. It includes some of his "aha" moments, when he figured out things that most of us take for granted. His is a life of anxiety and distractions coming from his own brain. He absolutely doesn't feel sorry for himself, though; while he's unhappy with parts of his life- like his inability to properly express to his mother how grateful he is to her- he is in general upbeat. I found it very interesting that he has obsessions that have to be dealt with to stay calm- as one with OCD myself, I could certainly relate to those, as well as his sensory overload. The book is written in short chapters; some only a couple of pages long. Many are posts from his blog, so this gives a bit of a disjointed feeling reading the book. The translators have a child on the spectrum themselves, and I suspect this gave them a special attachment to this project. I recommend this book to anyone with a family member or friend on the spectrum, especially if that person has trouble communicating. Five stars.

This book is startling, compassionate, articulate and down-to-earth. It is a collection of short essays by a non-verbal autistic young man who can communicate by touching a board with an alphabet grid. The reader gets an inside view of what it means to have severe autism - and this book unlocks the inner world of a tender-hearted, thoughtful young man whose greatest desire is to be able to speak love and gratitude to his loving parents and the teachers who have helped him. He writes about his school experiences, positive and negative. He writes about the thought processes - his mother says, "it's raining!" and runs to take the laundry off the line. He outlines how he processes this simple event, and wonders how "neurotypical" people can make such leaps. He is loving, grateful, and a lovely young man who pounds his own head when he is mad at his brain and bites his shirt sleeves when he is upset. He talks about fixations, obsessions, and how he battles them. If you have a relative with autism (I do) it is like a whole new world - if this is the rich inner life of one

person society deems severely impaired, what more can we do to unlock the world of countless people with autism? Very thought-provoking, informative, and moving. Highly recommended.

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