Explaining The Double Empathy Theory – text and image description

# Page 1

## Page 1, Frame 1:

Text: Explaining the Double Empathy Theory (with apologies to Dr Damian Milton)

ID: A dog and cat sit opposite each other, separated by a ravine. The dog has a speech bubble saying “Woof!”. The cat replies with a speech bubble saying “Meow?”

## Page 1, Frame 2:

Text: Being autistic often feels like being a cat stuck in a world full of dogs.

ID: A line of five dogs sits in a room; they are all smiling and wagging their tails. At the very end of the row, there is a ginger and white cat. She is also wagging her tail, but in annoyance, as one of the dogs licks her head enthusiastically.

# Page 2

## Page 2, Frame 1:

Text: The world is too loud, too intense, and it feels like you’re speaking a different language from everyone else.

## Page 2, Frame 2:

ID: The cat from the first page is sleeping happily in a soft beanbag, and purring loudly. A greyhound dog sits next to her, frowning, and has a speech bubble saying: “Stop growling, it’s rude!”.

## Page 2, Frame 3:

ID: The cat is crouched down on the ground, covering her ears, with her tail bushed up and thrashing from side to side. She has a pained expression on her face. Behind her, three dogs are jumping around after a frisbee, barking loudly. A little dachshund dog sits next to the cat, looking at her, and has a thought bubble that reads: “She must like it, her tail is wagging”

## Page 2, Frame 4:

Text: The world tells you that you’re the problem, that you need to fit in.

ID: The cat sits looking sad and defeated, head down and whiskers drooping. Three dogs surround her, with speech bubbles coming from their mouths:

A dachshund with an angry expression asks: “What’s wrong with you?”

A beagle dog with an angry expression says: “You just need to try harder to be like other dogs”.

A greyhound with a worried expression says: “Maybe we should send her to canine therapy”

# Page 3

## Page 3, Frame 1:

Text: But maybe you’re not just a rubbish version of a dog

ID: The ginger and white cat sits curled up on the ground, looking miserable. Her ears and whiskers are drooping and she has a sad expression on her face. A smiling brown tabby cat comes up to her and says: “Psst… I know a place”.

## Page 3, Frame 2:

Text: Maybe you’re actually a perfectly good cat

ID: The ginger and white cat stands looking in amazement at a room full of other cats. There is a sign on the wall that says “Cat Club”. The room is designed for cats, with lots of things they enjoy – cardboard boxes, cat trees, cushions, high shelves, and cat toys. The cats are all enjoying the room quietly, on their own, except for two who are playing side by side. All the cats look content. The ginger and white cat has a thought bubble that reads: “Holy litter box, this is amazing”.

## Page 3, Frame 3:

ID: The ginger and white cat addresses the viewer directly, with a cross expression on her face. Speech bubbles coming from her read: “Hold up. Why do I need to make all the effort? How come I always need to be more dog? Why couldn’t you try being more cat?”

# Page 4

## Page 4, Frame 1:

Text: Cats and dogs, or autistic and non-autistic people, have different life experiences and forms of social communication, which makes it harder to understand and empathise with each other – this is called the Double Empathy Gap. Perspective-taking is a two-way process, and both sides have a responsibility to try to understand and empathise with the other.

## Page 4, Frame 2:

ID: In an image that echoes the first frame of the comic, a woman and a cat stand facing another woman and a dog, separated by a ravine. The women both have their arms crossed. The dog and cat are the same ones from the first image.

Next to the woman and the cat, there is text that reads:

Autistic people might find it harder to:

* Understand non-autistic people
* Communicate their perspective to non-autistic people
* Filter out sensory stimuli

Next to the woman and the dog, there is text that reads:

Non-autistic people might find it harder to:

* Understand autistic people
* Remember their perspective isn’t the only one
* Imagine autistic people’s sensory world.

## Page 4, Frame 3:

Text: Cats and autistic people aren’t wrong, they’re just different. Both sides need to make the effort to bridge the gap.

ID: Two dogs and a cat sit in a room with a sign marked “Intro to understanding cats”. The sign also has the autistic infinity symbol, but with ears and a tail to make it look like a cat. The dogs and cat are each sitting in their own cardboard box. The greyhound from earlier in the comic sits in one, wagging her tail, and saying “You’re right, this is pretty great!”.