

Book Discussion

The Ride Together by Paul and Judy Karasik

1. Share the excerpt that you brought to class: a passage that you found interesting, and explain what it means to you.
2. In what ways were David's siblings affected by his autism, both when they were children and also as adults? Paul describes his mixed emotions toward David in the chapter "Bizarro World." How do these conflicting emotions compare to the feelings of all children toward their siblings?
3. In the Karasik household, besides accommodating David's behaviors, the family cared for both Grandfather and Sister. What did the children learn from living with their disabled extended family members?
4. How did Judy and Paul explain David's differences to their peers? How did having a brother who was special affect their social development? Is the realization that peers might negatively judge our family a similar or dissimilar experience for children without a sibling with a disability?
5. At the time that David was a child, autistic children were not educated in the public school and it was a constant struggle for his parents to find him adequate care. How did David benefit from the educational settings where he was placed and how was he a victim of them? How can a society be more supportive of families with exceptional children?
6. As the Karasik children grew older and moved away from the family home, how did their transitions affect the other members of their family? How are these transitions similar to those that are occurring in your own family, with you being a college student and developing a life separate from your parents and siblings?
7. How did Judy and Paul differ in their relations with David? How might age, gender and birth order affect each of their perspectives on David's autism? Compare the effectiveness of their story-telling genre that each used in the book; which style did you think was most compelling?