

RELEASED: Wednesday 20 September, 2017

***Australian Story* - Monday 25 September, 8pm on ABC and ABC iview**

FOUND IN TRANSLATION – PROFESSOR TONY ATTWOOD

“I describe myself as a translator between two different cultures - to explain the neurotypical world to the Aspie and the Aspie world to neurotypical. So, I’m bi-lingual.” Professor Tony Attwood

“Tony Attwood was really the first clinical psychologist in the world to look at Asperger’s traits as assets and not as something to be fixed.”
Dr Michelle Garnett, colleague

“He understands my autism and he gives me tools to use to help with it and he’s my ‘go-to guy’.” Summer Farrelly, 10-year-old patient

Brisbane-based Professor Tony Attwood is regarded as a world expert on Asperger’s syndrome, also known as high-functioning autism.

He wrote ‘the bible’ on Asperger’s and travels the world, presenting his unique perspective that it is not a condition to be ‘fixed’ but a gift to be valued.

“I think many of the heroes in life, and the greatest scientists and artists, actually have Asperger’s syndrome,” Professor Attwood says.

“Laurence Olivier and Peter Sellars, Vincent Van Gogh and Andy Warhol had many of those characteristics,” he says.

“There is an ability to pursue something with great intensity.”

Tony Attwood is highly regarded for his ability to connect with and bring out the talents of people with Asperger’s. His skills are borne out of personal life experience. By studying his stepfather’s Asperger’s traits, Attwood says he learnt to speak its unique language.

But while Professor Attwood has reached the top of his field, he reveals on *Australian Story* the personal cost of a missed diagnosis in his own family. Early in his career, he overlooked the signs of Asperger’s in his son Wil. The consequences were devastating for everyone as Wil turned to a life of drugs, crime and jail.

“When he was young, I didn’t have that knowledge, nobody had that knowledge. So, I have an apology to Wil that I didn’t see what I now know was there,” Professor Attwood says.

“I don't hold it against him for failing to diagnose me”, his son Wil says, “but since the diagnosis my relationship with my father has become much stronger.”

Producer: Kent Gordon.

For further information and interviews contact:

**Kim Bassett, TV Publicist, Audiences, 03 9524 2580/0409 600 456 or
bassett.kim@abc.net.au**