

# Is The Good Doctor Really Good?

By: Paige Platter

The Good Doctor is an ABC television show about an autistic doctor living and working in an allistic world. Allistic being those who aren't autistic. ABC based the show on a Korean drama of the same name. The show has been on the air for three years now, earning its first season a 62% on Rotten Tomatoes. The main focus of the show is its main character, Shaun Murphy, who's an autistic doctor with savant syndrome, and all the difficulties within his life.

Autism is a spectrum, most allistics are familiar with the High Functioning, Low Functioning ends of the spectrum, however, it's a bit more complicated than that. Autistic people can be high functioning, low functioning, or somewhere in the middle. Some people even refer to it as a salad bar of symptoms. It's a very individualized disorder. Many have problems socializing, as seen with Dr. Murphy, while others are good at it. Some are adverse to touch, again seen by Shaun Murphy in season three when his girlfriend Carly Lever attempts to hold his hand. Everyone has their own quirks when it comes to any neurodivergent disorder. But Murphy's are a bit stereotypical.

Shaun Murphy is the touch-adverse, socially unintelligent, hyper-focused, autistic stereotype.



He and his symptoms are what everyone thinks about when they think of autism. But that's not all there is to it. Autism is like DNA, there is no two alike. Some may seem very similar, but there's always a difference no matter how small it is. Shaun also has savant syndrome which means he's going to be very knowledgeable in one area, in this case, medicine. However, the show portrays him as almost Sherlock Holmes-like in his ability to deduce problems and solutions, but his coarseness to people. Now there is a case to be made that Sherlock Holmes was autistic, but

he was also hyper-intelligent. Shaun Murphy is not. In fact, in anything that isn't medicine, Murphy can be rather blunt and unknowledgeable.

Portraying autism can be hard and it's hard to please everyone. Angel Mann of 'The Mighty.com' said it best, "it is impossible because autism is so different for everyone who experiences it," which is true. Autism comes in many shapes and sizes, but Murphy is the stereotype. Which in this case is a good thing. Just like Julia from Sesame Street, Murphy is being used to educate allistics about autism. The autistic people see the world differently and Murphy is being used to show allistics what an autistic world is like. Some of these stereotypes are even rooted in fact. The CDC reported that 44% of autistic people have average or above-average intellect, even if it's not savant syndrome, it still shows that autistic people can be smart. Contrary to the belief that autistic people are extremely unintelligent. They also reported that 1 in 59 children have autism, so education matters.

The Good Doctor is good entertainment and good education. Showing people that autistic people can succeed and aren't just the stereotypes. Not only is it funny, witty, and just enjoyable to watch but it teaches people both about medicine and autism.