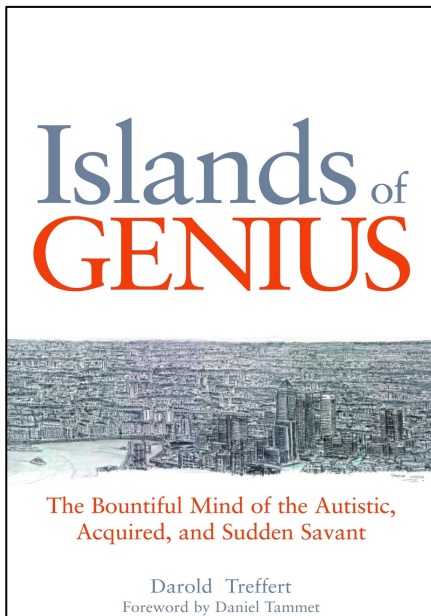




Do not release before 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010

## Prepare to meet some extraordinary people . . .



*At age three Kim asked what the word “confidential” meant. He was told kiddingly to look it up in the dictionary and he did just that. He somehow knew how to use alphabetical listings, found the word and then proceeded to read, phonetically, the words definition.*

- Chapter 10

Dr Darold Treffert, consultant on the film Rainman, is the world’s leading expert on savant syndrome. Here in his new book **Islands of Genius: The Bountiful Mind of the Autistic, Acquired and Sudden Savant** (Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers on 27th May 2010 ISBN 9781849058100, £19.99) he introduces us to some of the extraordinary people he has had the honour to get to know.

Meet **Stephen Wiltshire**, who, after a fifteen minute helicopter ride over London, drew a spectacularly accurate four metre sketch of the seven square miles of London, street by street, window by window and **Leslie Lemke** who played Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 flawlessly after hearing it for the first time age 14. Meet **Daniel Tammet** or “Brainman” who has the capacity to learn a new language within a week and to recite Pi to 22,514 decimal places, not to mention **Kim Peek**, the “mount Everest of Memory” and **Dr Temple Grandin**.

What all of these people share is a startling juxtaposition of prodigious talent and severe disability; an “island of genius” in a sea of conditions that include autism, severe learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, and blindness.

*This book is an account of my 47 –year journey with these remarkable people, their equally remarkable families and caregivers. It summarizes what I have learned along the way on this rare journey about the mind of the savant, which is where and why I began my enquiry. But it is also an account of a voyage into the world of the savant, because as I sought to find out more about the condition the savant has, I learned more about the person who has the condition ...I have learned as much about matters of the heart as I have about circuits of the brain.*



Dr Darold Treffert also introduces us to the startling phenomena of genetic memory – instances where individuals somehow know how to do things they had never learnt- accidental or acquired savantism, when people suddenly display remarkable talents they never had before, such as the construction worker who after a stroke suddenly became an accomplished poet and artist. Treffert convincingly argues that these occurrences point towards a “reservoir of buried or untapped potential –an inner savant capability- in all of us”.

**Darold A. Treffert**, M.D. is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin, School of Medicine. He has worked with savants and researched this rare condition for nearly 50 years, and was a consultant on the award-winning movie *Rain Man* in which Dustin Hoffman plays the part of an autistic savant. Kim Peek - the inspiration for the film - is just one of the extraordinary individuals Dr. Treffert introduces us to in the book. Darold Treffert will be interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *All in the Mind* at the start of June

**For more information about *Islands of Genius* or Darold Treffert, please contact Megan Cleary on 0207 833 2307 or email [megan.cleary@jkp.com](mailto:megan.cleary@jkp.com)**

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