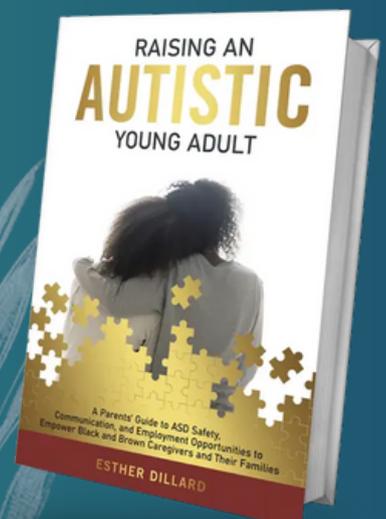




# Empowering Communities Through Storytelling, Advocacy, and Inclusion



Esther Dillard is an award-winning journalist, author, and autism advocate with over 20 years of experience in television, radio, and print. A 2024 recipient of The Gracies Award for her groundbreaking series *Black, Autistic, and Safe*, Esther is a sought-after speaker and storyteller who inspires audiences to embrace inclusion and elevate diverse voices. She is the author of *Raising an Autistic Young Adult*, a resource for parents navigating the challenges of young adulthood on the autism spectrum. As a former college professor and host of *The Color Between The Lines* podcast, Esther uses her expertise to foster meaningful conversations that bridge gaps in education, advocacy, and community engagement.



## TOPICS

1. **Breaking Barriers:** Pitching Neurodiverse Stories that Make Headlines
2. **Black, Autistic, and Safe:** Advocacy for Police Reform and Mental Health Response — Insights from Esther's award-winning series highlighting practical steps to create safer communities for neurodiverse individuals.
3. **Raising an Autistic Young Adult:** Tools for Parents Navigating Transition — Guidance for parents supporting young adults on the spectrum through education, career, and independent living.
4. **The Power of Storytelling:** Shaping Advocacy and Driving Change — Strategies to use personal narratives as tools for advocacy, inclusion, and systemic reform.
5. **From Diagnosis to Advocacy:** A Parent's Journey with Autism — Esther's personal story of raising a neurodiverse child and the lessons learned along the way.
6. **The Role of Media in Shaping Perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion:** An analysis of how media narratives can promote understanding or reinforce bias in coverage of neurodiverse and marginalized communities.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What inspired you to write *Raising an Autistic Young Adult*, and what impact has it had?
2. What are the biggest challenges Black and Brown parents face when raising neurodiverse children?
3. How can storytelling be used as a tool for advocacy and inclusion?
4. What should every police department know about responding to mental health crises involving neurodiverse individuals?
5. What changes need to happen in higher education to better support neurodiverse students?
6. What lessons did you learn from your award-winning series, *Black, Autistic, and Safe*?
7. Why is it essential for businesses to invest in neurodiverse talent?
8. How can educators and parents collaborate to improve literacy for students with autism, ADHD, or dyslexia?
9. What can media professionals do to ensure more inclusive representation of neurodiverse and marginalized communities?
10. What are the first steps parents should take to advocate for their neurodiverse children in school or work settings?