

THE SOUND OF PATHOLOGICAL

They call it pathological.

As if our bodies invented ruin.

As if the wildfire in our ribs were anything but a map toward safety.

They name us pathologically demand-avoidant.

We call it alive.

*A nervous system wired for truth-telling,
a pulse that knows when the world leans in too close,
when autonomy thins like ice under a boot we never asked to wear.*

They say,

*“Regular demand avoidance is one thing...
but pathological is different.”*

*And we watch them twist themselves into shapes that look like science
but sound like fear.*

Because every time they say

“It’s not about unmet needs,”

their breath betrays them-

whispering safety,

muttering autonomy,

naming the very human hungers they pretend don’t count

when they live in bodies like ours.

*We answer authentically:
Safety is a need.
Autonomy is a need.
Autistic needs are human needs.
And when those needs go unmet,
our brains sound the alarm-
faster than theirs,
louder than theirs,
sometimes so loud we can taste the colour blue,
feel the sound of footsteps,
smell the sharp edge of someone's expectation before they've even spoken.
They call that pathology.
We call it pure survival.
A nervous system reading the room before the room reads itself.
They mistake our resistance for defiance,
our refusal for character flaw,
our fight mode for aggression-
never noticing the way our shoulders only rise like storm-clouds
when the air thickens with someone else's urgency.
You see, a PDAer doesn't hear the words in isolation.
We hear the intention.
The unspoken instruction, the expectation,
rustling like dry grass under every "gentle" sentence.*

Declarative language?

*If the relationship is safe,
it dances like soft light through trees.*

If it's not,

it's just a demand wearing perfume.

We hear the timeline.

We taste the pressure.

We feel the expectation in our teeth,

metallic, electric-

a micro-shock against the enamel of our being.

We are not tricked by tone.

We cannot be softened by grammar.

We carry truth under our skin,

and our bodies speak it before we get to choose the words.

This is not behaviour.

It is physiology.

*It is the body's refusal to walk willingly into a lion's mouth just because the lion
says please.*

If you want to know what helps,

stop trying to out-smart the nervous system.

Stop scripting safety instead of building it.

Give us autonomy that's real-

the kind with sharp edges and soft landing places.

Give us timelines we shaped ourselves,

and permission to say no without your world collapsing.

*Give us honesty,
unvarnished and unperformed.
We can smell the difference between calm and someone pretending,
wearing their own mask.
Give us predictability without prison bars.
Structure without suffocation.
Boundaries that hold but don't cage.
Give us a world where our refusal is not read as rebellion
but recognized as the body's anthem to its own survival.
They call it PDA.
I call it the Autistic Need for Autonomy-
My friend ANA,
like breath,
like exhale,
like the moment the body unclenches because it was finally trusted.
We are not wired wrong.
We are wired honest.
We are the warning bells in a burning building.
We are the instinct they wish they had learned before they taught us to ignore
our own.*

So no-

PDA is not pathological.

*The pathology is a society that punishes children for protecting themselves,
that gaslights adults for listening to their bodies,
that calls human need a malfunction.*

We refuse.

We resist.

We rise.

*Not because we are difficult,
but because we know the cost of silence.*

Our “no” is a sacred thing.

A boundary.

A compass.

A pulse.

A protest.

*And when the world demands,
we answer in the only language our bodies trust:*

*I will not betray myself
to make you comfortable.*

For PDAers- and for every nervous-system that ever said “no” to survive.