Temple Grandin is a noted animal expert and advocate for autistic populations who penned the books 'Animals in Translation' and 'Animals Make Us Human.'

**Who Is Temple Grandin?**

Temple Grandin was diagnosed with autism as a child and went on to pursue work in psychology and animal science. She has become a leading advocate for autistic communities and has also written books and provided consultation on the humane treatment of animals. In 2010, HBO released an Emmy Award-winning film on Grandin’s life.

**Early Life**

Grandin was born to parents Richard Grandin and Eustacia Cutler in Boston, Massachusetts, on August 29, 1947. At the age of 2, Grandin was diagnosed with autism, considered a form of brain damage at the time. Cutler, initially blamed by physicians for her daughter’s condition, worked tirelessly to find the best care and instruction for Grandin. Her treatments included extensive speech therapy, which helped to draw out and reinforce Grandin’s communicative abilities.

Grandin began to speak at the age of 4. Although her parents sought the best possible teachers, social interactions remained difficult in middle and high school, where other students teased Grandin regularly for her verbal tics.

Despite these difficulties, Grandin achieved considerable academic success. She earned a degree in psychology from Franklin Pierce College in 1970, followed by a master's degree in animal science from Arizona State University and a doctoral degree in animal science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She then worked as a consultant to companies with large animal slaughterhouse operations, advising them on ways of improving the quality of life of their cattle.

**Advocacy and Books**

Grandin became nationally known after appearing in Oliver Sacks's 1995 book, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, the title of which is derived from Grandin's description of how she feels in social settings. By that time, she had already made a name for herself in autism advocacy circles. Grandin first spoke publicly about autism in the 1980s, at the request of one of the founders of the Autism Society of America.

In addition to autism advocacy, Grandin is well known for her work regarding animal welfare, neurology and philosophy. In the essay "Animals Are Not Things," Grandin argues that while animals are technically property in our society, the law ultimately grants them certain key protections. Her books, including *Animals in Translation* and *Animals Make Us Human*, have garnered critical acclaim.

Grandin's willingness to work with fast-food companies and other slaughterhouse owners is controversial within the animal rights community. In her books, Grandin makes the case that the alleviation of anxiety, rather than the maximum extension of life, should be the priority for those keeping any animals. She notes the high degree of anxiety suffered by domestic animals left for long periods of time without human or animal interaction as an example of the ways in which animal welfare is neglected outside of the slaughterhouse.

As a high-functioning autistic person, Grandin has been able to make sense of and articulate her unusual life experiences with rare depth. She has described her hypersensitivity to noise and other sensory stimuli, which can make socializing painful in addition to being dull. She is a primarily visual thinker who considers verbal communication to be a secondary skill. Grandin also has an extreme sensitivity to detail and environmental change, which she credits for her insight into the minds of cattle and domesticated animals.

Grandin has taken strong positions on autism and the education of autistic children. She advocates early intervention, including the training of teachers to direct each child’s specific fixations. She is a champion of “neurodiversity” and has opposed the notion of a comprehensive cure for autism. She argues that her contributions to the field of animal welfare would not have been possible without the insights and sensitivities that are a consequence of her autism.

Grandin has been recognized by the academic community and the general public for her work. In 2009, she was named a fellow of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. She is the recipient of several honorary degrees and has been featured on a range of television and radio programs.

**Movie**

In 2010, HBO released a film entitled *Temple Grandin*, starring actress [Claire Danes](https://www.biography.com/actor/claire-danes). The movie received 15 Emmy Award nominations and won five, including the Emmy for outstanding made for television movie and best actress in a drama (Danes). Grandin appeared on stage during the ceremony, making her own brief remarks to the crowd. Danes also won a Golden Globe (best performance by an actress in a mini-series or motion picture made for television) for her role in *Temple Grandin*.

**Personal Life** Grandin has cited her lack of interest in emotional issues and relationships, including fictional representations of interpersonal relationships. She is unmarried and has no children.

In her writing, particularly her memoir *Thinking in Pictures*, Grandin explains the ways in which autism shapes her daily life. She wears soft and comfortable clothes to balance her sensory integration dysfunction and avoids sensory overload at all costs. As a teenager, Grandin designed a "squeeze machine" based on the containers used to pacify cattle during immunizations. She found that the structure had a significant therapeutic benefit, helping her to manage her anxiety.