



I. Introduction

Asperger Syndrome is one of the several profiles under the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It has been recently referred to as “High-Functioning Autism” since people with this condition usually have higher cognitive skills (i.e. above average verbal skills) than others with autism.

Still, like most under ASD, their primary difficulties resides on social interactions (i.e. non-verbal gestures) and odd responses/ behaviours (i.e repetition, obsessions). Children and adults with Asperger Syndrome get diagnosed only when they start to have serious difficulties in school or at work. And often, those with undiagnosed Asperger Syndrome instead tend to seek help for stress, anxiety and depression.

Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French ENT Specialist established that by retraining the ear and stimulating the brain at the same time, it awakens the desire to communicate and learn. Dr. Tomatis developed the Tomatis® Method, a neuro-sensory stimulation program, to enable and activate the ear-brain-body connections to adapt to its acoustic environment.

II. Case presentation

Louis was 3 years old when he was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. His parents are both Asians who met in the United Kingdom yet moved to Australia for a better climate and lifestyle. His mother had a good pregnancy with no morning sickness and even worked full-time as an accountant. At 27 weeks, however, she developed gestational diabetes.

Louis was born at 39 weeks. His mother decided to have a C-section under epidural since the water broke with no contraction. He was breastfed for 18 months. He never had an ear infection; however, he gets colds easily. His milestones are also within a normal range--Walked at 11 months, spoke English and his parents' native language; at 18 months, got toilet-trained at 2 1/2 within a week, and acquired gross motor skills with ease.

Louis was very good academically--read and spelt very well, had good manners, and was very caring when he saw someone upset. However, his attention and concentration was limited, he did not easily listen and the instructions needed to be repeated a lot all day long.



In class, he got easily distracted, did not want to complete tasks, had difficulty in staying on topics, and was disruptive. However, Louis' parents also noted that he was too afraid to make mistakes because wanted to be 100% perfect. He also tend to lose control over his emotions. For example, he was more aggressive with friends when upset yet he did not want to be consoled by his peers.

III. Management and Outcome

After the first Tomatis® Program, Louis showed more understanding towards oral information. He became the top student in reading and he got perfect scores in spelling. His writing was also neater. His teachers did not know his condition yet they said he was the best student in guitar.

He displayed more confidence since he wanted to try new things. He also tried new food (*"It tastes different but I am going to try"*).

He started to be more empathic. He still did not like punishment but he responded appropriately with kindness and politeness. Also, he was very aware and responsible with his younger sister (i.e. eater, bottle, bag, etc.). He even held hands with his parents.

After the second Tomatis® Program, he showed better eye contact, was less anxious showing no more biting of his nails, and could even hold a conversation and stayed in the same topic.

His Mum did not receive complaints from his teachers making her less and less frustrated. He was also getting along well with his soccer team members and was more aware of them.

At home, his memory had improved greatly, he accepted his mistakes whenever he loses in computer games. He also taught his sister how to write properly and showed better eye contact and attention skills.

Louis transformed into a totally different child within four (4) months to the extent that the psychologist was ruling out the Asperger diagnosis.



The Science Behind It!

The Tomatis® Method is an educational program with a neurosensory-integrative approach to Autism Spectrum Disorders such as Asperger Syndrome. It provides the person listening to music (usually by Mozart and Gregorian chants) with sound contrasts or filters in high and low frequencies through the ear.

The sound contrasts produced by the TalksUp® device are transmitted via air and bone conduction. In air conduction, the filtered music travels through the outer ear to the middle ear while in bone conduction, it travels through the skull directly to the inner ear then to the brain. It is very important for these sounds to successfully proceed through each part especially through the inner ear where the vestibule and cochlea are located.

Specifically, the vestibular system is responsible for relaying the information from the ear to the brain, then to the rest of the body. The vestibular system is the network that manages all the body movement and coordination, muscle tone, sense of direction, sense of space, balance, body-image, and has the most extensive connections in all parts of the brain.

As the vagus nerve is also connected to the ear and the brain, the Tomatis® Method actively brings balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems allowing emotional balance, better appetite, and sleep patterns.

One of the most limiting aspects of ASD profiles is the inability to connect and relate to other people. As for Louis' case, the Tomatis® Method worked by improving his behaviour when it comes to dealing with other people. It actively influenced important connections that continue to improve over 200,000 lives every year. For more information on how you can access this program, visit www.tomatis.com.au!



Defying the Borders of the Spectrum A Case Study of Asperger Syndrome and the Tomatis® Method

Françoise Nicoloff is a registered psychologist and an International Tomatis® Consultant and Trainer. Françoise has worked for nearly four decades around the world with children and adults suffering from anxiety, depression, learning and communication difficulties. She is passionate about helping those people especially when their difficulties are linked to auditory processing which means that their brains do not hear what their ears are hearing. Françoise is often invited to speak at conferences. She has chosen to be based in Sydney and she travels within Australia and around the world. Recently, she has been asked to support families and professionals in China too. She can be contacted on 1800 677 010 or by email at info@tomatis.com.au.

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