



## I. Introduction

At a later part of our lives, we come to a point where we suddenly lose all this vibrant energy within us. This often results from the increasing demands of our mental, physical and emotional needs and the decrease of our sources of motivation and activity (i.e. relationships, career, personal growth).

Nevertheless, Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French ENT, established a ground-breaking theory that explained how music and sounds can become powerful forces of change and improvement. Using his clinical studies, he discovered the energizing and therapeutic effects of high-pitched sounds.

More and more research also proved that music can greatly influence your muscular energy, metabolism, digestion, and most especially your emotions and behaviour.

## II. Case presentation

I first met Monique, a 75-year-old woman, at the Mind, Body and Spirit Festival. As Monique aged, she became depressed. Her hearing capacity diminished remarkably causing trouble with her family and friends.

Monique used to be bubbly, active and enjoyed interactions. Suddenly, her loss of hearing, balance, and lack of coordination caused her to withdraw from social gatherings. Since then, she started to avoid going out or mixing with people leading to a very poor quality of life.

## III. Management and Outcome

As her granddaughter was undergoing the Tomatis® Method for her learning difficulties, we offered Monique to benefit from the program too. Soon after, she improved physical balance and orientation especially when she was walking on the streets or taking the train.

She became more positive in life and regained her *joie de vivre* that allowed her to endeavour new activities and projects like renovating her bathroom, which she had planned a long time before.



She found herself being able to multi-task on daily life activities. Her memory was more accurate with written words or following-up of an interrupted activity.

Monique's sleeping patterns improved. And she could sleep through the whole night without waking up several times.

Most especially, she became more confident about herself. Her concentration and awareness improved significantly and she was overjoyed knowing that she could entertain people again.

She noticed that she was more patient with herself and others. Her tolerance level had increased that she could give more time and latitude to people letting the situations unfold nicely without being upset.

### The Science Behind It!

Over the years, research has shown that music has a direct effect on people's physical body, emotions, and behaviour. However, the use of music for therapy becomes more interesting when you know that one of the main organs for sound reception, the ear, does a lot more than just hearing.

The vestibular system, a major part of our inner ear, is responsible for maintaining balance, verticality, coordination, muscle tone and vision. But more importantly, Jinu et al. (2017) stated that if this area is stimulated [by music]:

*“Vestibular stimulation can modulate mood and hence influence emotions depending on the region of vestibular stimulation. Indeed, the concepts of vestibular system influencing emotions have been used therapeutically...”*

As French ENT and voice specialist, Dr. Alfred Tomatis, said, *“If the sounds can be restored to the ear, the voice will immediately restore the missing sounds.”*

Dr. Tomatis ascertained there is a strong relationship between the ear and the voice, that is, through listening, learning, and communication. In this case, poor listening makes poor communicators.

Realising this audio-vocal relationship, he established the Tomatis® Method, a neurosensory program specially designed to surprise the brain by creating unpredictable sound contrasts in the music and voice.



## Age Does Not Matter Depression and the Tomatis® Method: A Case Study

We always try to anticipate things and we feel so confident when we can predict what is going to happen. The Gating® is designed to challenge the brain. By changing the contrasts of sounds, the brain tries to cope with this modification. In some other words, the Gating® is waking up the brain from its routine and put it into a listening posture. Meaning, the brain is ready and functionally-able to perceive and comprehend any information.

Monique's emotional regulation and overall neurovegetative life--appetite, sleeping patterns and other autonomic central nervous functions--improved with the Tomatis® Method working on the vagus nerve that brought balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems.

In Monique's case, age did not really matter to revitalise and retrain the ear, brain, and body connections allowing her to recover and enjoy a better lifestyle. For more information, visit [www.tomatis.com.au](http://www.tomatis.com.au)!

**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](mailto:info@tomatis.com.au).

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