



## Testimonials

### Dealing with a Sensory Processing Disorder

Linda MBChB (M.D.)

I had spent much time reading and thinking about our son, trying to work out exactly what was going on for him - what was at the basis of his challenges? We have had suggestions of Aspergers syndrome, dyspraxia, a sensory integration disorder and classic autism. However I could never 100% agree with these diagnoses and his giftedness made the puzzle he presented even more difficult to decipher. But I knew he was in there somewhere. I just had to work out how to get him out. He avoided eye contact and said his first sentence that another person in our family could understand at the age of 4 3/4. This was part of an articulation problem, a sign of his oral-motor dyspraxia. If he got wound up about something, he would shout and throw a tantrum.

One day I was drawn to 'Google' Tomatis' work and found Paulina's centre. Due to my medical training I can be quite stringent in my analysis of all the 'treatments' out there. I did not have any great hope of this Listening Training doing anything, but after reading the testimonial of another parent whose son had some similar traits to Alexander I thought we should give it a try.

During the second series of sessions all of a sudden it was like a switch was turned on. His eyes - well they really made contact with us - he could remember sequences, the days of the week and even who Dad's friends were, names of people I did not think he'd know. It was all in there. At the time we had some people staying and they noticed the difference, too - so it wasn't just us being fanciful. Eight months on, he is a different child. The improvement in his communication and short-term memory have been remarkable. His face is animated, and he can hold ideas in his mind without having to blurt them out immediately for fear of forgetting them. His sense of time has changed; he knows exactly when his birthday is and is counting down the days! He now even has friends to invite to his party! I didn't imagine a year ago that this would be happening. Another surprise for me was the effect on myself. My own growth too has come such a long way in this time.

We now have our son back. He has been freed out of himself and is steadily catching up as he climbs the ladder of emotional development. I know that we are only at this point because we did the Listening with Paulina. As a family we will forever be grateful. Her non-judgemental, holistic and child-centered approach was wonderful. Not only this, but we had a fun time!

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### Joya - A Parent's Experience

Jill Hounsell- Chairperson Autism NZ Nelson/Marlborough Branch

*Taken directly from the Nelson branch newsletter:*

Over recent months Alan and I put our 7 year old son Stephen, who has an autism spectrum disorder (PDD-NOS) on the Joya Listening Training Programme.

Our experience: I really doubted that Stephen would keep the headphones on, let alone listen for 2 hours every day but he did. We watched him totally relax. Sometimes he even fell asleep, other times he was busy playing with the great toys Paulina has.

Over a period of several weeks we watched our son change into a 'new' Stephen, with increased communication and responsiveness. It was almost as though he came 'out of his shell'. At school the teachers noticed even greater changes, including greater participation and assertiveness, a new behaviour from a boy who has always been 'passive'. It has been an interesting and rewarding experience for all of us.

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## Dealing with Psychological Trauma

Sylvia and Thomas

I am a South American film and documentary maker. During the civil war I spent many years living and working in Sarajevo and other hotspots. I stayed, even when my film crew left, married and had a child. Unfortunately for all of us there was a separation from the father and we moved back to Argentina. Both my son and I have gone through some horrendous experiences which made it very difficult to adapt to a let's call it 'South American lifestyle' and work/school environment again. We needed a break and came to New Zealand for an 'extended holiday' hoping that this country with its serenity and beauty would bring us some peace. Through a musician friend of mine in Auckland I got in touch with Paulina and decided to do the Listening Training here, rather than in my own country. It has been an unexpected and life changing experience.

Paulina is wonderful with children and has years of experience in understanding trauma. She has a quick mind and an open, compassionate heart. I no longer take any anti-depressants, can sleep and have a much more positive attitude towards life. I have found a new sense of self and am a better mother to my my son, Thomas, who is no longer troubled by nightmares and anxiety. Thank you, Paulina.

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## Hearing Loss / Stress

Tom Besson, Speech and Language Pathologist (M.S.)

*Listening is to hearing as seeing is to gazing.* This analogy makes sense to me and I am happy to have had the experience of fully appreciating it through my involvement with Paulina at Joya. Paulina brings many healing facets into focus when helping her clients improve their situation. The brief time I have spent with Listening Training in her home-based practice has resulted in significant positive change in both Listening levels and self-perception.

Having a background in speech and language development, I can testify to the effectiveness of Listening Training for a wide range of physical, communicative and spiritual needs. I encourage anyone who seeks these benefits to consult with Paulina. A lifetime of experience and dedication to the healing arts have developed her into a first rate therapist.

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## Performing Arts

Camilla

I am a solo performer, who creates improvisational material at the time of the performance. In order to be able to do that I need to have an abundance of energy and to be clear, open, alert, vibrant and focused. A few months before my last performance at the Suter in Nelson I came across Listening Training. This method, more than any other I know and have experienced, has helped me enormously on an energetic as well as a creative level. The nervousness and exhaustion I usually feel before my performances has diminished substantially. The quality of my voice both in speaking and singing is better than ever before. I feel no strain at all. I have learnt to 'listen' more intently to what is needed to enhance my life and I've become more creative as a performer and group leader. Paulina's presence during the sessions provides a sense of safety and the Method itself is wonderfully gentle yet profound. I highly recommend it.

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## Creative Arts

Karsten

I have a 16-year background in sound engineering and music production and for the past six years have also worked in the educational sector of this field at the SAE Institute in Auckland. I had heard about Alfred Tomatis as early as 1995 in Germany. I knew there was no centre in New Zealand at the time so I put my intention to do the training on hold, yet I felt that I could benefit professionally from improved hearing and better control over my listening abilities. In 2002 I started investigating where closest to New Zealand the therapy was offered. Some research on the internet followed by a few emails and phone calls directed me to the Australian Tomatis centre. The director of the Sydney centre informed me of Paulina's venture to set up a clinic in Nelson. I did the Listening therapy in late 2002/ early 2003.

I am impressed by the effect the Listening had not only on my critical listening abilities as a sound engineer but also on my overall well-being. I feel much more competent in my work. I have also become more confident in other areas such as interpersonal relationships and gained a more positive view on life in general. The audiogram testing done at the beginning and end of the sessions revealed a significant change in my hearing curves.

Paulina is very knowledgeable in a variety of disciplines and has the ability to connect those so that they complement each other. I am convinced that her extensive background and wealth of experience has added quality to the sector she works in. The method she offers holds great potential for a huge variety of clients. I wish her all the success she deserves.

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## **Creative Arts**

Cass - Singer /Songwriter

The first time I heard the name Tomatis I was sitting in a classroom with others who, like me, were keen to develop their counselling skills. Our tutor showed us an article which dealt with listening skills and the importance of the ears with regards to our development as 'in touch' human beings. The article referred to a true story about a French monastery where the monks had 'modernised' their ways and stopped their traditional early morning chanting. Over time things changed dramatically, and only after the monks were instructed to take up their chanting again did they regain the health and vitality that had gradually declined during their time of musical 'abstinence.' This story stayed with me like a seed of promise until almost a lifetime later - when I myself would come to know the magic and healing power of sound within my own life... as I took up singing again!

As a Jazz singer it is important to develop a personal style, but insecurities had crept in. When I met Paulina I was at a place where I wanted to know what my true voice was and how it sounded, no longer content to sing or speak what others deemed correct. You can take this both literally and figuratively!

Paulina became my ally in this. It has been an interesting journey. Some friends who have seen me perform in the past say, "You have blossomed; what has happened to you?" I know the answer: I have rediscovered my capacity for joy. I speak my truth, I sing my song, with *my* voice, and I will never ever be in doubt of the power of truly listening and being heard!!

With gratitude and attitude!! Cass McInnes

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## **Dyspraxia and Related 'Dys-functions'**

Suzie

Daniel, my 9 year old son, has recently undergone two blocks of Listening Therapy sessions - the first being 15 days of 2 hours a day - then a further 8 days of Listening. I have at this stage observed some profound changes in my son:

- He is much less anxious and more at peace with himself - he is much more balanced and more aware of his body - which means less accident-prone!
- His confidence and independence have improved significantly - he is now doing more independent tasks.
- The first observable change was his sleep pattern and quality - he sleeps longer now (not until 6 am!) and is less wakeful during the night.
- He now seems to be open to the world - as his awareness of self and confidence grew, he became a happier child.
- His memory improved considerably - now he can recall his day at school and what great joy it is for me to listen to him talk about his day rather than the constant "I cannot remember, Mummy".

These are just a few of the observable changes to date - from a child who was locked in a world of struggles with very little self esteem and confidence, I now have a happy, confident boy who can communicate his thoughts and feelings. The future looks so much brighter.

I cannot recommend the Listening and Paulina enough. Doing this has created a turning point in our lives. It's a new beginning for my son. I am so pleased we took this step and am very grateful to Paulina for her integrity, her skills and her willingness to bring this world-renowned therapy to New Zealand. If anyone would like to make contact to discuss my experience further, please do. Paulina has my number.

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## Dyspraxia - Asperger's

Sarah

It is about three months since I completed a basic Tomatis-based Listening Training at the Joya centre, done in segments over a period of three months. I heard about the Training via the local Dyspraxia Support network. There was no pressing need, but it intuitively 'called' me as something potentially helpful to my situation. The Method, combined with Paulina's unique gifts, skills, and provision of a supportive environment, produces what I call the 'Joya Experience'. The way she shares herself as an equal partner in the process, offering respect, service, comfort, humour, warmth and attention, is highly beneficial. And she offers scope for personal creative experiments.

In my case we experimented with my being my own 'mother' for the sonic rebirth. The experiences of choosing what to read, then reading aloud into a microphone, and listening later to the specially filtered recording of my own voice reading back to myself - all these proved to be most transformative and revelatory. The reading aloud of a certain chapter of an old childhood favourite was like riding a wave. The outcome of the whole procedure seemed to open up a new awareness of my voice with regards to its range in harmonics and emotional variation, and an improved vocal confidence. It was exciting and it encouraged me (in the third segment) to experiment and practice with sounding, singing, reading prepared public statements on issues I am passionate about, spontaneous speech, dialogue etc. This was all relayed back to the headphones in a feedback loop while we were doing the regular listening.

Since the training I have been noticing how, in an undramatic but profound way, relationships with others are enhanced and easier. I more consistently stay centered even during challenging communications without taking criticism so personally (that is a boon in the public arena). My life path and priorities have become easier in a subtle but real way. There has been a strengthening of trust. This removes the anxiety in decision-making, uncertainty, and difficulties big or small.

I highly recommend this Training to be an integral part of state/tax-funded education, health and welfare systems available to all. In the meantime, I highly recommend it to anyone in the position to consider it.

Tihei mauriora! Honouring the life spirit in Paulina's valuable work!

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## Autism

Julie

I am the mother of Michael, a four year-old autistic child. Prior to the Listening Training, Michael displayed many of the typical characteristics of autistic children: withdrawn, lots of obsessive behaviour, little eye contact, little emotional response (apart from tantrums), sensory imbalances which impeded many everyday activities (eg showering, haircutting, holding hands eg across a road, guiding his movements, etc.) No spoken language.

We learned about the Listening Training through our GP, who had met Paulina. It was difficult at first to accustom Michael to the special headphones and in the beginning he first had to be asleep before we could get them on. However, after several sessions, Michael eventually accepted the treatment style and we commenced a block of two-hourly sessions for a period of 15 consecutive days.

After the initial treatment block, Michael's behaviour improved, his extra-sensory imbalance in regard to his head had completely disappeared and his eye contact and concentration improved. After about a month we commenced a second block course of two-hour sessions for eight consecutive days. This time there were no opposition tactics from Michael and the second course went relatively smoothly. Michael's interest in many things but especially in books improved and he even began to speak a few words.

Since that time, his behaviour has improved significantly, with marked reduction in tantrums. His tolerance and concentration has increased, his eye contact has improved and most importantly, he has begun to imitate and learn words and his understanding of language has greatly improved. I totally endorse the Listening Training. Without this programme I believe my son would not have progressed to the degree he has accomplished. His speech therapist, early intervention teachers, pre-school teacher and his education support worker have all noticed marked improvements in Michael's listening and communicating abilities, his concentration and improved behaviour.

Michael has now started in the Montessori method of education that I did not think would be appropriate. His progress, I believe, has been significantly helped because of the sound therapy programme carried out by Paulina.

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## **Stress Release, Improved Vocal and People Skills**

Lisa

December 2003 and January 2004 I attended two Listening courses at the Joya Centre. During these sessions I experienced deep relaxation, both physically and psychologically. Besides that, my listening became more acute, my ability to discriminate the various instruments increased. I also observed a remarkable "opening up" to other people and certain realms in my self, memories that needed to be confronted and dealt with. The second course - the eight days - was especially beneficial for me, since it included exercises of sounding, singing and reading aloud. My vocal skills improved significantly by doing this. It was an amazing experience to feel that much joy and liveliness. I thank Paulina very much for her holistic approach, her professionalism and guidance. Wishing her lots of success.

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## **Depression**

Ellen

I have struggled with, guilt, regret and sorrow for years since the break-up of my marriage which took place years ago. I began the Listening Training because I did not want to go the conventional way and because I was curious. The initial test showed I had several distortions in the way I look at life which did not surprise me at all. Paulina told me at the beginning that there was a chance that it would bring up painful feelings. She was right. There was a period when my regret and remorse reached a peak, and during this time I felt much pain and sorrow and dreadfully alone. I knew there was nothing that could be done to bring back that which I had lost and I had to accept it as it was. At this time many more issues emerged for me to deal with including childhood feelings and issues concerning abandonment. I realised that the problems in my marriage were directly connected.

I spent quite some time feeling these feelings deeply, and judging myself heartlessly. But I did not back out and worked on these issues with Paulina and in three months' time - just a normal period of 60 hours of Listening - there have been amazing changes. I find that it is no longer 'normal' to judge myself so harshly. And accepting that I may always be lonely in a way changed the impact of this possibility. It removed the intense sadness and regret I had been feeling for most of my days. I believe the Listening Training was instrumental in overcoming these feelings and that it helped in a subtle but powerful way to bring back balance.

I feel more connected and grateful and feel a sense of strength within which wasn't there before. The time of feeling the feelings is short compared to a lifetime of imbalance.

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## **Hearing Loss**

John

I have been diagnosed as having a hearing loss in both ears, which limits my ability to hear sounds at higher frequencies, as found in the human voice. It was for this dysfunction that I have been doing the Listening Training since I was hoping to be able to redevelop hearing potential. Paulina made me aware that I should not expect a 'cure' of any kind but that doing the Listening Training might still help me to focus better.

I have done the full 60 hours and found that even after the first two weeks of regular treatment, there has been improvement in the way I hear. I have a hearing aid, but I need only to use this minimally. My hearing ability is now more acute and what I also have noticed is that I have a greater ability to listen and communicate. As a singer in choirs and as a community worker, better listening skills are a valuable asset. I think many people could benefit from this work.

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## **Neurological Disorder**

Jordi

Jordi (1988) has been institutionalised for two years. He has severe frontal lobe damage. Although he has quite a few autistic traits, he still seems to be quite aware of other people's emotions. He is hyperactive - has good fine motor skills - but his muscles are all very tense. Jordi only makes some random sounds - at least in our perception they are 'random'. He will only be able to come to the centre for two weeks.

Paulina: "Subtle changes, indicating a willingness to communicate, that's what we are looking for. Eye contact, smiles, sounds. He mimics a lot. Perhaps we can playfully integrate certain useful things: like combing hair - brushing teeth, doing a puzzle. We'll have to watch carefully for signs of upset, withdrawal or lethargy."

Excerpts from his care worker's diary: "Jordi was very quiet during the listening. Did not pull his pants, which normally he does nearly all the time. He seemed relaxed, played with toys on the floor. I am amazed - normally he has such difficulty settling down. Jordi was amazing and seemed so relaxed. He played with blocks and the train set. He wasn't as fidgety. I have never seen him being at ease like this.

Quiet again. We did some exercises - clapping hands (crossing the midline) and ball games. He listened to Gregorian Chant (male voices). He 'told' me that something special/something new was happening. He did not want to let go of the headphones, so we kept them on, even when he had to go to the toilet.

He is more content. As soon as I said to him, "Jordi, hurry up, or we are not going to the music," he hurried up and was outside in a minute, jumping for joy. During the session we played with a ball. We tried to teach him not only to catch but also to throw. Just to show him we threw the ball between the three of us. He also played with lego and the traffic mat. I notice that he is especially fond of the Gregorian Chant.

He has become calmer, more focused, has better bladder control; only incidentally does he walk on tiptoe now. He has become more vocal: "di di, dada"... and seeks contact with other children. He loves the microphone and the sound of his own voice. I believe he also has greater awareness of what is going on around him. Changes are subtle, but certainly for the better."

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## Pregnancy/Languages

Kati

My name is Kati. Originally I am from Germany. My husband and I came to Nelson in 2001. We had been travelling, sailing the seven seas, for quite a few years. Of all the beautiful places in the world we chose Nelson as our home - a place to raise our children.

While I was pregnant with Lennard I chose to do the Listening Training. My husband was away for several months, we had a new home, new friends but still being here on my own, with our little 1.5 year old little daughter, was not necessarily easy. I often felt that I had difficulty organising things, even making a phone call I kept putting off, until I was 'in the right frame of mind'. That was partially because of the language barrier but also because of the insecurities that I had carried around for many years.

I did the full Listening Training - 15 days initially when I was five months into my pregnancy and then two times the 8 days. At the time I enjoyed the peace and quiet of the clinic - the time that I had with Paulina, who I could talk to in my mother tongue - and also the serenity of the place, when I was there on my own, sipping my tea, doing a few drawings and then dozing off again on the couch. I then thought that now was the time to also do the Listening for Languages programme.

I had to be more active for that of course. It was not just Listening to English voices, I also had to repeat words and phrases and work with my own voice and a microphone. I did not do it for very long, but enjoyed it. Nowadays I hardly have any difficulty talking to people - making phone calls in English is no longer a problem. The first thing I noticed was that my voice changed - it used to be a bit timid, a bit monotonous but now gradually it has got more colour. I felt relaxed, did my daily little chores, took care of my daughter and the house, did nothing special besides taking care of ourselves, but with one difference: that I enjoyed it more. I had fewer worries and felt more at ease. The pregnancy went well, there were no complications. My son is developing into a beautiful little boy. He has an ear for rhythm and 'dances' to all sorts of music. He is a cheery little chap, and the few occasions he is distressed or tired and yet cannot fall asleep, there are a few pieces of music that he reacts to and they calm him down.

In retrospect I can say that the Listening Training was beneficial for both of us. It changed my perception of things. I now stand for who I am, have learned to voice my opinions and not care too much whether that's 'acceptable' or not. Just the other day friends of mine, who'd known me then, mentioned how relaxed I was during this period. Without my husband, without my relatives and with just a few friends in a foreign country. Normally that is not an easy situation. I think I would have managed anyway, but the Listening Training certainly made it easier.

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## Neurological Disorders/ Epilepsy

Benjamin

I came to see Paulina as a last resort. I am a builder and have a licence to do scaffolding. No one among my colleagues has ever known that I was taking drugs against epilepsy. I feared that I would lose my licence. However, there were certain side-effects to the drugs and I really wanted to get clean. I almost felt like an addict, someone with a dark little secret. My wife arranged an appointment with Paulina and I did a full course of Listening. It made me feel relaxed and I stopped stuttering (something I only do when under stress) but it took a while before I did dare to let go off the medicine I was still taking. My GP and the neurologist were not very sympathetic to me 'experimenting with my health'. But I am glad I did not heed the warning and dared to take control over this myself. I had the support of my wife, which was much more important. I needed to act, do something, take responsibility. I gradually weaned myself off the medicine. I haven't had a seizure since (January 2003) and feel much better. Lost weight, feel much more at ease with myself. My wife and kids tell me that I have become a better father. I have lost my impatience with them (and myself). Doing the Listening Training was a crucial Turning Point and life has become better ever since. Thank you, Paulina.