

FOREWORD

And what is man? I will gladly say that he is the receiving antenna of a creation that persistently questions. He is an ear in search of all that can be perceived, from the audible all the way to the imperceptible. To be an ear is to listen, this seems to me to be the culmination of human development.

—Alfred Tomatis, *Pourquoi Mozart?*

Another dream comes true! Publishing a book on the Tomatis® Method and the success stories of some of the children who have experienced it has been a long-cherished dream for me and it has finally come to life. This book is presented by the International Association of Registered Certified Tomatis® Consultants (IARCTC), which was launched in Paris in November 2001, some ten years ago. My mother and I were so pleased to be able to follow the direction of Christian Tomatis and Thierry Gaujarengues (CEO of Tomatis® Développement SA) in their wish that we organize our profession and gather all our colleagues around the world into one official professional body.

I first encountered Dr. Tomatis's work in 1977 through my family, and more particularly through the positive results that the Tomatis® Method achieved with my grandmother, who struggled with bipolar disorder. At the same time, one of my brothers was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and my other brother was dyslexic and facing drastic decisions at work and in his private life. All three of them returned from Paris (we were living in the south of France at the time) totally transformed after listening to Mozart and Gregorian chant for many hours through the "Electronic Ear." This triggered my interest greatly, and I made an appointment with Dr. Tomatis to complete an assessment with him. Both of my parents registered for the training, however my father passed away unexpectedly just before it began. My mother was devastated but we strongly encouraged her to continue with the project, and through her work I was exposed to many more stories. My fascination grew and eventually led me to embark on my own Tomatis® listening journey.

For the last 33 years I have been able to witness firsthand the smiles on parents' faces as they are finally able to trust in their own belief in their child's future and potential. I have seen children change rapidly, overcoming their difficulties in speech, in learning, in confidence, and in using their

body. Some parents and family members call it, “The miracle of Tomatis® and Mozart,” and the effect is like turning a key in a lock— the foundation of a child’s abilities are finally present and able to be used to their full potential. The desire to see that light spring into children’s eyes has taken me on an exceptional journey around the world, and now brought me back to Australia to make another dream come true.

Let me share one of my favorite stories with you ...

“Why would you be interested in a book of stories?”

The Magician looked at the Young Apprentice and replied, “What is magic?”

“The art of transformation and change!”

“Good. And what is the role of a Magician?”

“The Magician’s role is to assist people to make useful and beneficial changes in their lives.”

“And how can this be achieved?”

“By developing greater awareness that all things have a structure, that change is always possible, that there is always more than one perspective, and that the essence of useful change lies in having both creativity and access to a greater number of choices ...”

“And what are the key principles?”

It is here that I always imagine the Apprentice looking up and replying to the Magician, who so-listens ...

“A Magician must think systematically and look for the connections between things that are not always apparent. For this reason a Magician must always treat information in its wider context, for nothing exists or makes sense in a vacuum.

A Magician must always be aware that her knowledge is provisional, that there is always something more to discover, and that there is always more than one way to achieve any outcome.

A Magician shares her knowledge, for this is an enlightened pathway to empowering others and to achieving immortality ...

A true Magician believes that none of the above are true, but acts as if they are true. She trusts the evidence of her senses to interpret the responses she gets to whatever she does; and she always considers which next choice will be the most appropriate in that particular situation.”

“You have learned well,” said the Magician. “And these are some of the reasons why a Magician collects and uses stories.”

And **this** is what this book is about—stories coming from Tomatis® consultants around the world, celebrating how the Tomatis® Method has helped to change children’s and parents’ lives and giving hope to people who think that they have run out of options. Here, the Magician is Dr. Tomatis, a French ear, nose and throat specialist who dedicated his life to understanding the intricate connections between the ear, the brain, the body and the soul, and he trained many professionals around the world. Although he passed away in 2001, his work still continues to evolve through his Apprentices, as we continue to train new consultants around the world.

Dr. Tomatis had a profound effect on my life. He gave my life a new purpose and set the course for the journey that I am still happily pursuing today—and it was under his influence that I decided to study psychology. I was fascinated by Dr. Tomatis’s ability to retain information—what he read and the experiences he shared—but what I was equally amazed by was his skill for synthesizing things that most people would never think of linking together. And he was incredibly erudite and very intuitive (which, in the scientific world, was not considered to be his best trait!). That was where his true Magic existed.

As a person, he was very approachable and I could talk with him about

many subjects. I remember being totally mesmerized by his knowledge at Carboneras (his summer villa in Spain, where he held trainings) during my first professional training. Sitting next to him during dinner at one of our group outings at the end of the training I told him, “Vous êtes une bibliothèque ambulante!” (You are a mobile library!) He had so much knowledge and so much intuition in understanding the human being.

Over the years, I have discovered many different “universes” thanks to Dr. Tomatis, the countries he sent me to, and the ones I decided to go to in order to initiate his Method and his principles. Dr. Tomatis is now acknowledged as a pioneer in many fields—which you can read more about in my friend Jean Pierre Granier’s introductory chapter in this book. Dr. Tomatis already knew about brain plasticity over 30 years before it became part of science, as we know it today. In my very early work with him we were witnessing it as we saw changes in communication, adaptation and learning skills in most of our clients, long before it became proven by science.

Dr. Tomatis was also very interested in understanding how and when listening starts during the cycle of life. His observations and knowledge about embryology and phylogenesis made him believe that prenatal life is incredibly important in the development of the baby to come. He also realized that listening starts in the womb. As a result, when I was pregnant with my daughter I completed the Tomatis® program to give my baby the best possible chance. And in fact, when she was born in Tahiti we discovered that she had an atresia of the esophagus after her first breastfeed and we learned that we would need to travel to Auckland in New Zealand to have surgery done. But I will tell more about her in one of the next books in The Listening Journey series.

Dr. Tomatis was always questioning his work and his observations. Over 20 years of working with him, I saw him constantly investigating new ways of programming: using air and bone conduction, trying some delays between the two, changing the kind of filters he used, and altering the range of frequencies, the quality of the music, and the settings of the Electronic Ear. After trying many different types of music, Tomatis

discovered that Mozart's music delivered the best results. The violin concertos of Mozart are rich in high-pitched sounds and Tomatis realized that the high-frequency sounds were "food for the brain." And apparently not only for the human brain—research shows that the music of Mozart helps plants to grow better, helps cows to produce more milk, and even, as I saw in the news last week, the micro-organisms in sewerage to break down more effectively.

Dr. Tomatis was the first person to recognize the powerful effect that the music of Mozart has on people of all ages—something that Tomatis® consultants observe clinically, and clients experience personally, on a day-to-day basis. After trying many kinds of music and many different composers, Tomatis realized that the music of Mozart, combined with the use of the Electronic Ear and its "gating" effect, was helping people to sustain attention, release tensions and blocked emotions, energize the brain, balance the whole ear-brain-body-spirit connection, and tone the body and the mind. He also introduced Gregorian chant in the auditory training programs, as he found that this authentic form of chanting is based on a rhythm involving the longest breath and the slowest heartbeat, while at the same time it is energizing and creates more flexibility in the body. Over the last three decades I have observed in countless people the lasting effects that the use of the modulation of Mozart and Gregorian chant processed through the Electronic Ear creates.

The Tomatis® Method is now delivered in over 400 centers in more than 40 countries across the world, and the equipment we use has evolved strongly in the digital era. The program can now also be delivered as a home-based program with the new digital Solisten® equipment. The Tomatis® Method programs are usually applied as intensive programs of eight to 15 days of listening for two hours a day. A minimum of 60 to 62 hours of listening training is recommended over two or three intensives with a break of four to six weeks between each group of listening training sessions. The program requires the use of special headphones equipped with air and bone conduction. I still remember when Dr. Tomatis first introduced bone conduction into the programs in the late 70s and early 80s. The addition of

bone conduction assisted in shortening the length of programs greatly, both in overall duration and in the number of listening hours per day. We used to listen for three hours a day for 21 days, (which was the way I completed my first program in 1977), and then it became two hours a day for 15 days. Now, depending on individual needs and profiles, the program can vary in the number of intensives that need to be administered—some children need the intervention for years, as you will read in Alix’s story, and some will only need 60 to 62 hours, as you will read in Ben’s story. It is the responsibility of the Tomatis® consultant to decide what is necessary, and to match the program to the child’s progress.

I encourage you to enjoy all of our stories—two of them are testimonials from mothers (one from the mother of a child with learning difficulties and the other the mother of a child diagnosed with autism), in others our colleagues from around the world share their stories about helping children and their families to face autism, Rett syndrome, ADD, auditory processing disorder, global developmental delay, speech delay, sensory integration difficulties, learning difficulties, behavioral difficulties and many other challenges. This book is intended to be flexible—the stories are designed to be read in whatever order you please, depending on your interest and inclination. But no matter which order you read them in, do not be surprised if you feel a tug at your heart and a tear in your eye as you read them—I certainly did, even after spending so many years witnessing how the Tomatis® Method has transformed the lives of so many children and their loving families. So sit back and let the discovery of the power of the ear, good listening and great music fill your heart and mind through these beautiful, heartfelt stories.

There is a chance that you may recognize the stories of Ana Lisa, Victor, Ben, Ana Laura, Alix or Michael as similar to those of your own child, grandchild, nephew or niece, or even the child of your next-door neighbor. If you do, you now know that there is light at the end of the tunnel and I hope that this book inspires you to find your closest certified Tomatis® consultant: **www.tomatisassociation.org** and **www.tomatis.com** will help you to connect with professionals from all around the world in order to

find the Tomatis® consultant closest to you.

Dr. Tomatis is no longer with us, but I continue to thank him, especially for fulfilling my dream of helping people to change their lives and giving them the hope that their dream can also become true. After reading this book you might want to learn or read more, so visit **www.thelisteningjourney.com** to discover when the next books in The Listening Journey series will be printed.

I love to travel, and I now invite you to sit back in your most comfortable chair and travel with us on a journey of discovery, of learning, of socio-emotional growth and of human potential.

So listen to the words from the heart and enjoy the journey!

Françoise Nicoloff

22 November 2010, Sydney, Australia

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