



PEDIATRIC NEUROPSYCHOLOGY AUTISM INITIATIVE

“COLUMBUS BREAKING THE EGG”

Dear Parents of Children having Autism and Related Pervasive Developmental Disorders,

Hogarth’s famous etching, “Columbus Breaking the Egg” depicts a scene in which Columbus, returning from having discovered the “Indies,” is surrounded by explorers. They mocked his achievements, saying that his discovery was something they could have done. Columbus calmly picked up an egg from a platter and asked the others to stand the egg on its tip. Each tried it, and the egg kept rolling on its side. Columbus picked up the egg, gave it a sharp crack on the table, and the egg stood up! The others laughed and said, “We could have done that too!” “Yes,” said Columbus. “But, I did it!”

Parents of children with Autism/PDD, you remind me so much of this dedicated explorer. With passion of Heart, Mind and Soul, you are on a journey of growth, going beyond the Genomes. Every day you rove theories of neural plasticity/brain growth, and show that the brain is the only organ in the human system that learns! You explore spiritual, environmental and biological avenues, developing brain connections which have a profound impact upon your children’s ability to love, grow and interact with others. You nurture their capacity for feeling and attachment, such very necessary steps toward thought and language.

Every day in my practice, I am touched and humbled by your unyielding passion to embrace your children, empowering their growth and development. I am always in awe of your determination to prevent your children from being “driven to distance.” Your pursuit of new avenues to growth surely makes you great explorers of new territory, querying the mapping of 3.1 billion chemical “letters” that make up human DNA. You challenge “what turns the Genome ‘on’ and what drives it...” Your children’s growth is evidence of the power of brain growth and the power of human potential.

Throughout your exploration of your children’s growth and development, I wish you a continued journey filled with wonder, excitement, joy and smiles on your children’s faces reflecting loving hearts, peaceful souls and thoughtful minds. You can proudly echo the words of Columbus, “But, I did it.” You are surely “standing the egg on its head!”

Warmly,
Dr. Val Scaramella-Nowinski
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