

Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman

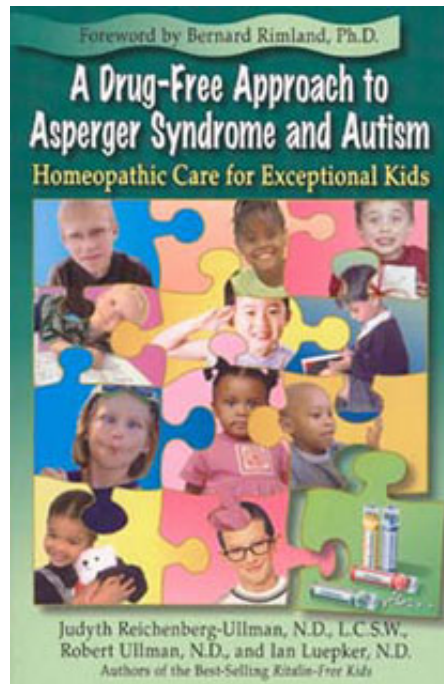
A Drug-Free Approach to Asperger Syndrome and Autism

Reading excerpt

[A Drug-Free Approach to Asperger Syndrome and Autism](#)

of [Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman](#)

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Contents

Foreword by Bernard Rimland, Ph.D	xi
Acknowledgments	xv
Introduction	xvii

PART ONE

Homeopathy: A Drug-Free Approach to Asperger Syndrome

- 1. Strangers in a Strange Land: Core Features of Asperger Syndrome** 2
- 2. Better Living Through Chemistry? The Pros and Cons of Medication** 17
- 3. Homeopathy: Medicine for All of You** 25
- 4. Homeopathy for ASD: Exceptional Medicine for Exceptional Kids** 37
- 5. What Parents Say: Living With ASD Before and After Homeopathy** 56

PART TWO

Actual Cases of Children on the Autism Spectrum

- 6. Awkward and Alienated: Human Behavior Does Not Compute**
 - Alan: Oblivious to Social Cues* 72
 - Angie: The Girl Who Swore, Spat, and Barked* 76
 - William: The Boy Who Twisted Wire* 81
 - Johanna: Bullied and on the Social Sidelines* 88

Jai: A Proactive Mom Seeks Treatment Prior to
Diagnosis 94

**7. Preoccupied and Persistent: Trains, Planes, and
Bionicles**

Tito: A Creative Escape from Bullying 101

Jared: Lions, Tigers, and T-Rexes 107

Drew: Weird Faces and Goofy Behavior 113

**8. Odd and Obsessive: Hand Washing, Twirling,
and Counting**

Chris: Barreling Into His Classmates at Eighty Miles
an Hour 123

Gina: Flipping, Flapping, and Fidgeting 130

Paolo: Free Trogs and Cracknutters 135

9. Sensitive and Selective: Picky in a Prickly World

Cody: Too Sensitive for Words 142 *Kevin*:

The Verbatim Kid 150

Conner: The Boy Who Couldn't Stand to Be
Restrained 156

**10. Monotones and Monologues: Parlez-Vous
Aspie?**

Malik: He Repeats Every Word I Say and It Drives '
Me Up a Wall 167

Noah: Vaccine and Antibiotic Damage 174

Jimmy: A Human Calculator 180

PART THREE

Possible Causes of ASD and Questions
about Diagnosis

**11. Of Genes and Vaccines: Why So Many Children
Have ASD 190**

- 12. Alphabet Soup: Diagnoses That Accompany or Disguise ASD** 195
- 13. Naming the Problem: The Challenges and Benefits of Diagnosis** 202

PART FOUR

What Else Can You Do to Help Your Child with ASD?

- 14. Other Alternative Treatments Worth Considering for ASD** 210
- 15. Bringing Balance to Your Family: Homeopathy For Parents and Siblings**
- Jemila : I Kept My Feelings All Inside* 226
- Riky: Baby PMS* 235
- 16. Practical Tips for Living With and Learning From Your Child With ASD** 240

PART FIVE

Exploring Homeopathic Treatment More Fully

- 17. The Most Common Questions That Parents Ask About Homeopathy** 248

Appendix: Resources for Homeopathy and ASD 259

Glossary 264 **Notes**

271 **Index** 277

About the Authors 289

Order Page 291

Foreword

Homeopathy is becoming increasingly well-accepted in the United States, as it has been in Europe for many years. A major reason for the upsurge in the popularity of homeopathy is the rapidly diminishing respect for conventional, traditional, "establishment" medicine. The concept behind homeopathy contrasts sharply with the assumptions of conventional American medicine.

Homeopathy embodies the idea that many of the symptoms of disease are actually manifestations of the body's attempts to heal itself. The homeopathic doctor sees his or her role as facilitating these efforts of the body to heal itself by administering medicines or "remedies" which will stimulate and augment the symptoms. Conventional U.S. medicine, also known as allopathic medicine, takes the opposite view—it assumes that if you give drugs which fight the symptoms rather than enhance them, the disease will disappear. Both of these competing theories, homeopathy and allopathy, have a certain amount of plausibility. The debate between advocates and practitioners of both sides has gone on for centuries.

Why, in recent years, has homeopathy suddenly become ascendant at the expense of allopathy? There are no doubt many answers to that question, but in my opinion the most important of those reasons is that as medical recordkeeping has become more bureaucratized, computerized and more accurate, it has become increasingly

important to ascertain whether she still needed the same medicine. It was probable, but a homeopath needs to remain ever open to the possibility that a different medicine may be indicated. Although Angle couldn't elaborate much on her headaches, she was able to describe how the other children picked on her and threw things at her on a daily basis. "They say I'm a loser and throw a sharp pencil at me. I feel sad and upset and want to really get 'em. But I just walk away. It's the same kids every day." When we inquired about her fears, Angie responded, "People picking on me. You know, the average things." We ended the interview by asking about her dreams. You guessed it: "People picking on me." Within two days of taking the *Lyssin*, Angle's headaches vanished.

William: The Boy Who Twisted Wire

William, fourteen years old, was brought to us, in large part, because of his academic and attitudinal problems. Paying attention in school was quite a challenge, as evidenced by below-average grades in language, math, and reading. His behavior deteriorated further when he ate dairy products. Melanie, William's mother, described her son as "narrow-minded, stubborn, rigid, and reluctant to venture into unfamiliar territory." When any request was made of William, his initial response was to scream, "No!" Twenty minutes later, he usually went ahead and completed the task.

In the third grade, William had taken Ritalin for a brief period of time. A thorough workup at age thirteen at the Mayo Clinic resulted in the diagnoses of AS, ADHD, and LD. The specialists concluded William ranked far behind his peers developmentally, despite his impressively articulate speech. Testing at the Pfeiffer

Institute had shown William to have an elevated copper/zinc ratio, leading to an extensive regimen of nutritional supplements over the previous four years.

During the interview William, was eager to speak for himself. The young man spoke slowly, seriously and ponderously—far more so than a typical teenager. Though William's affect was flat, and it was difficult to get him excited about anything, he expressed himself very adeptly. William's first words immediately caught our attention.

/ bend and twist wire if I am bored. While I twist, I daydream about the future, what I'll do after college, stuff I saw before, and scenes from movies. I put my daydreaming on cruise control. My image of myself is 'the kid who twists the wire/ Twisting takes the edge off of being bored.

A Highly Articulate Young Man

Melanie was concerned about her son's ongoing anxiety and recurrent episodes of anger. William became easily annoyed at little things, like his toddler cousins throwing fits, or his sister borrowing his DVDs and not returning them. Every now and then, the angry outburst became more intense, during which time William shouted and refused to obey his parents.

When asked about his fears, William was very articulate:

/ hate spiders! They crawl on my skin. I hate snakes, too. Bats are really ugly and scary. They are creatures of the night. I hate great white sharks. They are scary and have yellow chunks of flesh hanging from their teeth. I don't like the idea of the speed of pain. I'm even afraid of a needle's prick. I hate needles. I even hate the idea of being stabbed with a

needle. I freak out during a blood draw. Needles don't agree with me and I don't like them. I would never get a body part pierced. I had ingrown toenails and I really did not like the burning pain I felt during the surgery.

When we broached the subject of school, William launched into a tirade about his intensely dislike of a particular teacher.

In seventh grade I was very angry. My special-ed math teacher drove me over the edge. She was fat, mean, and really, really ugly. She yelled a lot. I suffered through the year. I'd come home tired, stressed, or upset about something. She was bossy, snotty, and had no patience. People are there in special-ed class because they don't get it. I guess my bad attitude prevented me from getting much out of the class.

"Oddball" Interests

When asked about hobbies or special interests, William elaborated, "I really like old movies, but my friends don't. I try to be socially acceptable, but it feels funny. I particularly like old horror movies like *Frankenstein*. I own 200 movies and 56 DVDs. I like thrillers. They are intense, exciting, and cool. My taste in movies is oddball."

"Oddball" was an apt description of how William perceived himself before receiving homeopathic treatment:

I have a lot of socially unacceptable things in my head. I'm not cool enough or social enough for those kids. All the girls started this 'William has cooties' thing, just like little kids. My social skills definitely

need work. I don't feel good enough to step into conversations, I scramble in my mind for things to say without looking like a complete idiot. Sometimes I talk about things that are above them. Or I decide to not talk and just keep quiet.

I'm known as being kind of unsocial. I listen to the preps to see what kinds of things they say. It used to be worse. At least now I can strike up a conversation. My pace is fast and slow. Fast and slow. I won't be rushed by anybody if I'm not in the mood. My mom says I don't know when to stop or start. If I have one problem left and it is time to go, I have to do it. / didn't start when she said to because I was daydreaming.

My parents, my sister, and I fight a lot. My mom is happy and jolly, I'm more moody and a not-smiling-a-lot person. I'm very narrow-minded and lazy. I don't want to do a lot of things, like read a big book. I do like to work at my grandmother's store. It's really huge, not boring like home. I have trouble making decisions about what I want, like what CD to buy. Should I just grab one and go or spend two hours choosing? My dad is like that. He sits back and thinks about things a long time.

Exceptional Features



Like many children with AS, William was lacking in social skills and considered an "oddball" not only by his own estimation, but by his peers as well. Additionally, he had difficulty making conversation. His mannerisms were stiff and his speech ponderous. He willingly admitted that he was narrow-minded, rigid, slow-paced, and had a negative attitude. One of the most unusual features of the case was William's description of his dreams. What a contrast for

such a seemingly non-reactive child to display such a strong sensitivity to needles and creatures that might bite him.

We first prescribed *Baryta sulphuricum* (Barium sulfate), the same medicine that we gave to Alan in the preceding case. Though there was a definite improvement in some areas, we went on to find a better medicine for him, as we will explain later in the case.

More Acquaintances and a Real Friend

Melanie reported that he seemed calmer and happier within a week of taking the *Baryta sulphuricum*. No longer bouncing off the walls, his anger and anxiety had diminished. He began to initiate get-togethers with other teenagers. Interactions with his parents went more smoothly. For the first time, William broke into tears upon seeing his baby nephew fall down. This was a remarkable occurrence since his parents could count on one hand the number of times they had seen their son cry since the time he was a toddler. William admitted to us that he did have more friends.

Over the **next** few months, William progressed. Meltdowns were rare, grades steadily improved, and his interactions with his parents were better. The young man was invited to his first birthday party in several years, and attracted a friend who was calling regularly. William shared in the interview. "I've been studying more. I have one good friend and some acquaintances. I got in a fight today, though. I wrestled him down and punched him in the cranium. I can make conversation, but I'm not very good at it, and I can't talk to girls at all. I don't have any problem asking them to dance, though."

William continued to relax by twisting wire. His increased socialization, combined with his naivete, had led him into some bad company and some less than opti-

maJ choices. When one of his new friends tried to commit suicide by taking an overdose of caffeine pills, William confided to his parents that he wished he would die or that the world would end in 2006, to his parents' alarm. With a bit of counseling from his parents, William eventually decided the friends he was hanging out with were the wrong crowd, and the suicidal feelings passed.

Further Improvement After Taking a Different Medicine

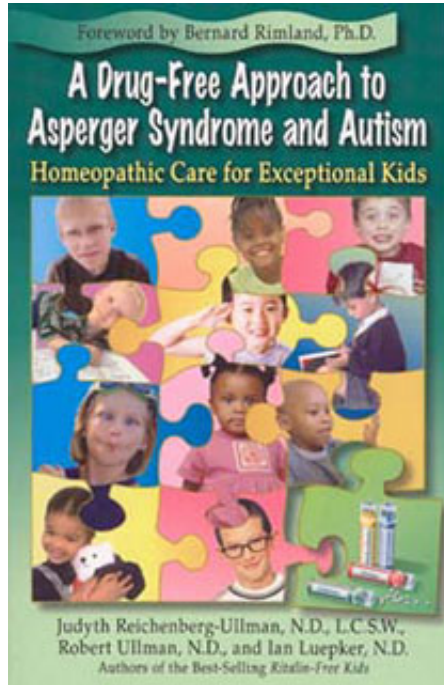
Despite William's improvement in a number of areas, we were not satisfied that we had found the best possible medicine for him. Six months into treatment, we restudied William's case and prescribed *Helleborus* (black hellebore). We chose this medicine primarily because of William's habit of staring off into space hypnotically while twisting wire, his slow pace, and strong sensitivity to pain as expressed in his dreams as well as his memory of the ingrown toenail surgery. Also characteristic of those needing *Helleborus* were William's withdrawn behavior, inability to comprehend, inattention, and inner anguish. Black hellebore is a member of the *Ranunculaceae* (buttercup family), which is indicated for children who are highly sensitive to various stimuli, including physical or emotional pain, clothing, noise, and the environment in general. Though slow and non-reactive externally, Williams' dreams showed a high degree of reactivity to pain, typical of those needing this medicine. Over the next three months, William developed a greater ability to focus and, according to his teacher, was better equipped to take notes in class, to understand the subject matter, and to organize, complete, and turn in assignments. His sense of responsibility and ability to cooperate were also better, and his attitude had taken a much-needed turn towards optimism.

Despite glowing reports from those around him, William acknowledged little progress. What other people saw in him, he could not yet find in himself. We have found, over the years, that even when they have experienced a dramatic shift as a result of homeopathy, some children remain unaware of how much they have changed. This is one reason that we prefer to communicate with the parent(s) privately first during follow-up visits, before talking to the children without the parents being present.

A second dose of *Helleborus*, administered two months later, produced an even more significant result. William's reading level took a giant leap. In fact, in the course of one year, he progressed from a fourth- to an eleventh-grade level, thanks to a combination of the homeopathy and his LD program. Although this degree of improvement over such a short time may seem impossible, it is something we have seen in a number of children.

Never one to overestimate his own progress, William did begrudgingly admit to doing better with remembering his assignments and completing his schoolwork. He added that he was enjoying art classes and was considering becoming a tattoo artist, an interesting choice for someone who had been so upset by needles.

By his next appointment, six months after changing the medicine to *Helleborus*, his attitude was even sunnier compared to the original William. "Today is a good day," he shared, "I'm not angry or unhappy. I feel pretty good." This level of optimism, coming from Mr. Negativity, was impressive. The idea of a career as a tattoo artist had gone by the wayside due to lack of artistic ability. William had obtained his learner's permit to drive, another step in the direction of independence. Socially, his school year had ended on a positive note—he had



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