

## Against the Odds: Sensory Processing Disorder and the Mum Who Transformed Her Sons' Lives

Dana Latter, with Leonard J Press, OD, FAAO, FCOVD

Paperback: 124 pages

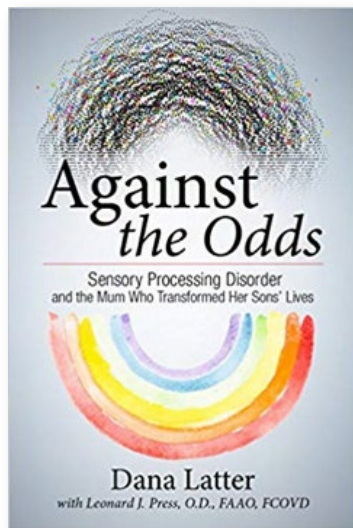
Publisher: Word Association Publishers (June 18, 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1633852512

ISBN-13: 978-1633852518.

Reviewed by: Linda Z. Sanet, COVT



In the fall of 2017 Dr. Leonard Press received an e-mail from a woman in the UK named Dana Latter. Ms. Latter is the mother of 2 sons who have been diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), and she was writing a book about her journey to find support and treatment for her sons. She invited Dr. Press to co-author the book with her, and he was so impressed with the manuscript that he agreed.

The result of this collaboration is the book, *Against the Odds*, which explores the different therapies and interventions Ms. Latter and her husband pursued as they were searching for help for their children. This is interspersed with

side notes and commentary from Dr. Press. Written with courage and honesty, the book is intended to be a resource and support for parents who may be navigating the same rough waters. It proved to be so compelling, poignant, and inspirational that I completed it in a single sitting.

As explained by Ms. Latter, "SPD occurs when the brain experiences problems in dealing with the information that it receives through the body's senses. It fails to respond or react in what is considered to be a normal manner, thereby causing the person with SPD problems when interacting with others and carrying out their daily activities."

Ms. Latter's oldest son, Guy was most affected by SPD; his brother, Tommy less so. The book focuses primarily on Guy and the Latter's journey to find help for him.

Guy was born via a natural and uncomplicated birth, and is described as being an easy-going, happy baby who smiled a lot. Physically he seemed to be maturing as expected, but by eight months of age it was starting to become clear that things were not as they should be. Guy did not exhibit the normal curiosity of children his age and did not seek out or enjoy contact with the other babies in his play groups. The Latter's were re-assured by their pediatrician and told not to worry – Guy was just a late bloomer.

By age three Guy was still not talking – his speech being limited to just a few words. The teachers at his nursery school observed that he avoided contact with other children, could be disruptive, and refused to participate in activities, preferring to be alone. People who were considered to be friends began to avoid the Latters, one even commenting, "Can't you see there's a problem with the boy?" Increasingly more isolated and with tensions rife in the family unit, it was time for the Latters to come to terms with Guy's condition.

Ms. Latter explains that at the time SPD was not well-recognized in the UK, and this complicated and prolonged finding help that would prove beneficial. She writes,

"[SPD] is further complicated because the symptoms may not be the same for each... child, resulting in the parents realizing that something is amiss, but having no idea what that something is. A trip to the family's medical professional usually follows, but because SPD is not recognized as its own medical condition, the outcome of the visit is more often than not unsatisfactory. The child is very often misdiagnosed or given the wrong treatment. To make matters worse, meaningful help is hard to find."

Frustrated, the Latters made the decision to leave the British National Health Service and take matters into their own hands. Doing extensive research and leaving no stone unturned, the Latters explored any and every therapy they felt could benefit their son. The challenges of frequent travel and financial concerns did not stop them. In the chapters that follow, with great detail and honest reflection, Ms. Latter explores and explains the different interventions they undertook and how they contributed to Guy's healing. These included Floortime (as developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan and Serena Wieder, PhD), Primitive Reflexes, Therapeutic Listening, Vision Therapy, and Syntonic Phototherapy. Realizing that the traditional school setting was not a nurturing environment, Ms. Latter, who has a degree in Education, began to home school

Guy. Although none of these therapies in isolation was the total answer to resolving Guy's dysfunctions, each in their own way proved to be beneficial, contributing to the young man he is today.

Ms. Latter writes in the Preface:

"It hasn't been easy, and it hasn't always been pretty, but we've hung in there, and our reward is a boy who is now doing very well, thank you very much. If left up to the health professionals, he would have been consigned to a life on the scrapheap."

In Chapter Seven, titled Therapists I found some words of advice for myself as a Vision Therapist. Over the years the Latters were involved with many different types of therapists, specialists in many disciplines. Not every therapist was a good match for Guy, nor was willing or able to work with a child who did not fit the traditional patterns. Ms. Latter's respectful yet honest words have given me much to think about as I begin my day of work.



---

**REVIEWER BIOGRAPHY:**

**Linda Z. Sanet, COVT**

Chula Vista, California

Linda Sanet received Certification as a COVT in 1978 and is currently employed in the office of Pilar Vergara Giménez in Albacete, Spain.

She received the first COVD COVT of the Year award in 2001 and the COVD President's award in 2007.

She recently completed a six year term on the COVD Exam Board (IECB).

---