



The Case of Nathan

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The first task to be achieved on the basis of anthroposophy in education... is to see that the teachers, the educators, are people who perceive the human being in the deepest sense and, having developed this attitude of genuinely observing the human being, approach the child with the love that results from such an attitude.¹

Rudolf Steiner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

After reading Peter Selg's *The Therapeutic Eye*,² in which the author describes Rudolf Steiner's extraordinary ability to perceive and understand other human beings, I resolved to conduct a case study of a child with autism. Steiner spoke of the importance of the intentional effort to see and understand children as one of the most important preconditions to any kind of educational or therapeutic work. While reading this book, my thoughts turned to Nathan, an autistic child in my class, who has been with me since the beginning of Grade 1. Out of all the children in this class, Nathan remained the greatest mystery in many ways. I wondered how to develop the capacity to understand this child, to gain insight into his inner world, and through this to better understand how to support him.

I sensed that this journey to penetrate Nathan's world, to develop the ability to perceive his inner nature and understand his development, would require a tremendous amount of personal inner work and self-development, but I also knew it would help me grow as a teacher and a human being.

Reflecting on the work done so far, I note that I have indeed acquired many new capacities and qualities I have realized throughout this journey: stimulating my inner growth and making me a stronger and better teacher.

At first, the contribution of this journey into Nathan's story would be, in terms of adding to existing research, like releasing a drop of water into the ocean. There are so many other children in the world with similar conditions; looking at one case is clearly an important, but still a very small step. On the other hand, I later

realized, the outcome of this case study turned out to be greater than initially envisioned. On a personal level, the capacities, skills, and abilities I developed throughout this work are transferable to working with other children—observing and understanding them better, and developing towards them an unconditional love fostered by understanding.

This study, then, is a mere drop in an ocean of the effort to understand children with completely different mindsets and world perceptions. However, I also hope that some of the revelations and the findings, along with the journey itself, would prove helpful and inspiring to other teachers who work with autistic children.

Background

Nathan was, at the beginning of this project, an 8-year-old boy and, second grade student at the Halton Waldorf School in Ontario. He was formally diagnosed with Autism. His first encounter with Waldorf education was through a summer camp he attended in the summer of 2018. At that time, 6-year-old Nathan completed first grade in a public school. He required educational support from a variety of sources, including individual educational assistance.

Nathan's report from the public school stated that he had difficulty following instructions and was unable to orientate himself during transitions. He was behind his peers academically and seemed challenged in establishing personal connections with his teachers and his classmates. The Halton Waldorf kindergarten teacher, Aniko Gereb, who ran the camp that summer, reached out to me, as the rising first grade teacher, and suggested that Nathan could be a good candidate for my class. She believed that the rhythm of a Waldorf school, its nurturing environment, holistic approach, and the strong loving authority of the teachers would benefit Nathan. He might be able to develop and progress well in this Waldorf environment.

After reading his report-card from the public school, my initial reaction was that our school could not serve a child with such high needs, as we do not have the same level of individual and remedial support and tutoring opportunities as public schools do. However, after meeting Nathan in person, I had a strong feeling that we should give Waldorf education a chance to meet Nathan's needs. Nathan's mother met this suggestion with trust and enrolled him in first grade.

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Essentials of Education* (London: Anthroposophic Press, 1997).

² Peter Selg, *The Therapeutic Eye: How Rudolf Steiner Saw Children* (Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books, 2008).

It wasn't clear what would be required to support Nathan's needs, but we decided to embark on this journey together with him and find answers to many questions along the way. It really was the moment Nathan entered the class for the first time that this case study of Nathan began.

Determining the Method

The first step of this study was developing a methodological approach to gaining a deeper insight into the nature of Nathan's inner world. Rudolf Steiner's extraordinary ability to observe children served as an inspiration for this study; however, his advice to teachers in how to observe children in an anthroposophical way was scant. In fact, Dr. Steiner demanded that the first Waldorf teachers in the Stuttgart school should refrain from following any prescribed anthroposophical approach, and should rather study the children in a very real and individualized way with the greatest attention to the child's soul. He emphasized that in developing a psychological eye, it is important to see the individual nature of the child and to refrain from any preconceived ideas.³

In the process of establishing a method to use to study Nathan, my mentor Elyse Pomeranz encouraged me to try something that was new for me, yet that worked very much in line with what Rudolf Steiner suggested to the first Waldorf teachers. She recommended refraining in the early stages of this study from reading existing methods of research or literature describing previous approaches to similar cases. Instead, Elyse recommended seeking inspiration and insights from the spiritual world and from my own inner being, through observation, meditation, night work and artistic experiences. This was a new and unusual way for me of taking on a study. Having worked in neuro-linguistic research for many years, the method I was used to always started with research by browsing mountains of literature on the topic, thus gaining as much factual information from outside sources as possible.

Looking inwards before looking out constituted a new research method for me, but it seemed relevant and applicable for this type of study. I decided to give it a try, and was looking forward to this experience. My gratitude to Elyse, for giving me the courage to embark on research in this new way and for her support throughout this journey, is substantial.

So, the steps included in this case consist of:

- Observation
- Meditation, including "night work"
- Artistic work
- Analyzing Nathan's work
- One-on-one work with Nathan

Aims

The primary aim of this study was to gain insight into Nathan's inner world, gather understanding of his perception of the people and world around him, and, if possible, see into his imagination. From a very practical standpoint, the goal was to determine how to best meet Nathan's academic needs. A long-term goal was to gain a better understanding of how to meet his unique personality—who is he—to challenge him in a helpful way, free from the aim to change him.

Embarking on this study could mean that the result of this process would provide more questions than answers. My personal goal was not to push towards getting answers; rather, it was to open myself to receive whatever observations that may come, while allowing as much time as needed for the process to unfold.

Observations of Nathan at School

When Nathan first came to the class in first grade, he seemed quite disoriented. I had to find new ways (quite different from approaches used with other students) of helping him settle into the daily rhythm and establish a connection with his classmates as well as with me as his teacher. Things that were quite obvious to other children would not immediately make sense to Nathan and

often needed to be explained. For example, it took him time to internalize the practice of raising a hand when wishing to respond to the teacher's question, or that of responding to the ringing of the bell by lining-up at the bell tower. Nathan would often raise his hand when everyone else did, only to reveal that he did not have a response to the specific question asked by the teacher.

During recess, Nathan at first spent most of his time on his own, but then gradually started participating in active and imaginative games with other children; he was often invited to join in by his classmates. He seemed quite content, confident, and happy in his being. It often seemed to me that the other children could sense his inner strength and positive disposition. That's why, despite the fact that he did not put too much effort into establishing contact

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³ See Peter Selg *The Therapeutic Eye*.

with his classmates, he was well received, loved, and respected by everyone in the class from the very first moment. Nathan participated well in every part of the lesson, following instructions and rules and doing his best. From the beginning of first grade, he demonstrated aptitude for math and reading, yet he was often challenged by new concepts, struggling to understand what was being asked of him.

New material introduced through images and pictures did not make sense to Nathan. He did not seem to make a connection between the image and the concept that it represents. For example, he would memorize the letter “B” easily, but would struggle to tell what connection it has with a Bear (a drawing of a Bear in the shape of “B” was used to teach this letter). He had a good grasp of the four basic math operations, but could not make a connection between the four characters—Farmer Plus, Mr. Minus, etc.—that were used to represent these operations. This raised many questions for me as a teacher, as to how my teaching could not only engage Nathan’s thinking, which seemed quite able to respond well, but also his feeling life and imagination—in other words, how to bring it all together for him.

In artistic work, Nathan was always settled, quiet, and very focused, trying to follow my instruction as precisely as possible to “do the right thing.” However, when my instructions were less restrictive, for example by asking the class to add details out of memory or imagination, he would often be quite lost, not knowing what to do. In his Main Lesson book, he layered the colors with lightness and elegance, yet struggled to bring his drawings to form. During free drawings, he would usually be the first one done, most of the time repeating a simple drawing of a tree and a sun. During painting classes, Nathan seemed most comfortably at home, blending the colors with ease and courage. He seemed to have a much better relationship with color than with shape. I noticed that allowing him to work with color and not encouraging him to put shape on paper would help him relax and breathe deeply, helping him awaken his imagination and look within himself.

During story-telling time, Nathan would sit quietly, maintaining good posture, yet it would appear as if he was not engaged with the story, as he did not maintain eye contact and often looked dreamy. He never participated in the recall portion of the lesson, and when asked to remember the story, he did not seem to

have retained any of its content. For the longest time, it appeared that Nathan did not understand or remember the stories told, until one day, in February, he surprised me with a birthday card that had characters of the “Mary’s Little Donkey” story, which I had read to the children during the days leading to Christmas in December. He presented this card to me on my birthday and said that he drew Mary, Joseph, the donkey, a boy who went for a ride on the donkey, and the children from the village, because ‘I loved that part of the story.’

During the reading of the story he did not seem to make any connection with what he was hearing, yet in February he presented me with the card, demonstrating a clear familiarity with the characters and the events of the story. This immediately altered my wrong assumption

that Nathan was not retaining any content of the stories he hears. Clearly, further investigation into Nathan’s comprehension and relationship with the stories and with time was in order.

Nathan is very musical and loves singing. When spending time outdoors, he often walks around singing one of the songs learned in the class. His mother says that he also sings often at home. On the other hand, recorder playing was and still is challenging for Nathan. He finds it hard to understand the fingering. It led to a lot of frustration in music classes.

In Handwork, similarly, it took Nathan almost six months to master knitting, as he could not grasp the sequence of movements in making a stitch. Then, one day, he “got it” and became the best knitter in the class. His work is exquisite—the stitches are perfectly even and his choice of color combinations is always beautiful. Notably, he always picks earth colors for his handwork projects. Different shades of brown, dark red, and green are among his favorite colors. He seems to have a natural eye for how to blend the colors in a beautiful, harmonious way.

In Movement class, Nathan displays a good sense of rhythm and balance. He can follow along with all the activities in the class. Sometimes, new activities that involve fine motor skills are challenging for him, but with some practice he is always able to master them.

In his relationship with teachers, once Nathan has established connection, he is loyal, respectful, and always willing to follow the rules, though he can be quite disoriented and lost with new teachers and new rules.

My initial reaction was that our Waldorf school could not serve a child with such high needs, as we do not have the same level of individual and remedial support and tutoring opportunities as public schools do.

Often, he would insist that things are done exactly the way I, “Ms. Markh,” expects them to be done and can get quite stubborn if he hears otherwise. On a couple of occasions, it went as far as a temper tantrum. Once, when a new teacher took over the Optional Afternoon Program, I was called in to school, because Nathan was crying so hard that no one could understand what happened. One of the girls in the class got hurt and Nathan knew that when somebody is hurt in our class, you give them a pat on the back, say “it’s OK” and offer the injured something to drink.

Apparently, Nathan performed the first two actions on this list, but as he was about to offer a drink to his friend, the teacher insisted that he come back into the classroom and allow someone else to take over looking after the hurt student. This instruction did not make any sense to Nathan. He was desperately yearning to offer his friend a drink, but the teacher did not understand it. It led to frustration and ended in a temper tantrum. When I arrived at school, and figured out what was going on, we called out the classmate who was hurt and Nathan offered her a drink. He felt better after that, but still said that it happened too late. I will be addressing Nathan’s relationship with time shortly. It is unique!

Most of the time Nathan and his teachers can understand each other well and find common language. If things are done differently by a teacher, it is important for Nathan to know the reason and to be informed in advance of any new rules or changes of course.

Overall, Nathan is a happy and easy-going child, who loves every aspect of his school.

Determining Temperament

Trying to determine Nathan’s temperament has remained elusive to this day. Every Waldorf teacher knows of the importance of working with temperaments for therapeutic and pedagogical purposes. The types of stories that would appeal to the child, the tone of the teacher’s voice, the position of the child’s desk in the class, dietary recommendations, etc.—all can be established based on a child’s temperament. This helps to understand the children and makes working in the classroom more effective. Yet, I found myself at a loss when trying to determine Nathan’s temperament, which would be important for any activity requiring division of the class into groups by temperaments, or, for example, when asking children to act out a character in a story in a way that would represent the individual’s

dominant temperament. Nathan seemed to fit equally well in any group, or not to fit into any at all.

To bring structure to this segment of my investigation, I printed out a chart that lists the qualities of each of the four temperaments, placed it on my desk and marked all observations. After a week I realized that this was a draining and unrewarding experience, and that it was leading me nowhere but to disappointment and frustration. So, I’ve put my chart away and hoped for some inspiration on how to proceed in determining Nathan’s temperament to arrive from elsewhere.

Another week passed and no new ideas came along. Returning to Rudolf Steiner’s work, I tried to find some guidelines relevant to difficulties in determining a temperament, or any other words of wisdom and inspiration that would help me move ahead. A reference in *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*⁴ explains the importance of judging a child’s temperament rightly, with an indication that everything else would then follow of its own accord.

In the same segment, the directive to approaching children with “no preconceived idea that they should be such or such,” caught my attention anew, raising a new question in my mind: What if this child is so different

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that categorizing him by temperament as we do with other children simply does not make sense? The rate of diagnosed autism in society has increased dramatically in recent decades, suggesting that autistic children were much less common in Steiner’s time than they are these days.⁵ Still, Rudolf Steiner often talked about the anticipation that human beings are to evolve in a new way. What if these new generations of autistic children are following a new path in human

evolution? What are they teaching us about the world, about people, and about themselves?

There was great relief in letting go of the goal to determine Nathan’s temperament and simply allowing

4 *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1998).

5 Based on data from a set of CDC studies, the Autism Science Foundation website reports the following:

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) reported that approximately 1 in 59 children in the United States has been identified with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This estimate is a 14% increase from the 1 in 68 rate in 2016 and a 47% increase from the 1 in 88 rate in 2012. In the 1980s autism prevalence was reported as 4 in 10,000. In the nineties, prevalence was 1 in 2500 and later 1 in 1000.

(<https://autismsciencefoundation.org/what-is-autism/how-common-is-autism/>)

myself to observe, pose questions, and contemplate. Instead of ticking the boxes in the chart, I would ask for help from the spiritual world, doing my best to meet Nathan with an open mind, watching, listening, observing and remaining open to whatever might come, letting intuition guide me towards what works best specifically for Nathan.

The best position for him to sit in the class became the seat in the very center of the room, at the very center of the temperament groupings of the rest of the class, where he is surrounded by his peers from all sides, feeling their warmth and feeling physically part of the group. I found that the voice that works best to converse with Nathan, to call and sing his name, is a strong and confident voice, the one I would usually use with choleric children. He often acts out choleric characters in our acting work, being the king who gives direction to the group, for example. In social interactions he seems to have many sanguine qualities. In working with color he tends to gravitate towards earthly colors of the melancholic.

Temperaments do arise in relation to the four bodies – astral, etheric, physical, and ego. Wanting to study Nathan's relationship to these bodies more deeply, I requested that our faculty at the Halton Waldorf School do a child study with Nathan as the focus. The perspective of other teachers and their impressions of Nathan would help me gain new insights for my own study. The child study, as always, consisted of four parts, representing the four bodies: physical, etheric, astral, and ego. We started by describing Nathan's physical body. Looking in detail at his appearance – his body type, posture, the proportion of his head, torso and limbs, the shape of his ears, fingers, etc. We shared observations related to his etheric body through the seven life processes: breathing, warming, digestion, secreting, maintaining, growing, and reproducing. Through observing his thinking, feeling and willing, as well as his likes and dislikes, we tried to gain insight into his astral body qualities. Looking at his ego consisted of creating a deed that comes from a higher place in Nathan, we then shared our insights and imaginations.

In relations to temperament work, after the child study it became obvious that Nathan is, in fact, unique. The alignment, association of temperaments with the four bodies, is not the same in him as with most other children. While he seemed connected to each temperament, he is not aligned with one.

If things are done differently by a teacher, it is important for Nathan to know the reason and to be informed in advance of any new rules or changes of course.

The child study gave better insight into how temperaments work in Nathan, which was the original question posed before the child study. In the end, however, it was not the temperament alignment that became the greatest revelation of the process.

After the child study there was a significant shift in Nathan's performance in the class and in his inner being. He was, as if suddenly, thriving at school; he was more settled and noticeably happier than before the study was completed. It was inspiring to witness how the act of "seeing" the child together with other teachers in the school had "reached him." He seemed aware of the work done, of our thoughts and care on a level of supersensible perception. It was a powerful firsthand experience

of how merely "seeing" a child, holding him in our attention, hearts and thoughts can cause a shift in the child's wellbeing. It helped immensely.

Meditation and Artistic Work

The child study I described happened in November of the second grade. After the study I was inspired to focus my meditative work, seeing the powerful effects of the child study and hoping that this would lead me to more insights into Nathan's personality.

Many aspects of the Waldorf curriculum seemed to work remarkably well for him. He thrived in our daily rhythm, shone in artistic work, and he even shifted in his understanding of the imaginary component. He made a perfect connection between the concept of place value and the character of Squirrel Nutkin, who gathered acorns into bags of 10, baskets of 100, and wheelbarrows of 1000. Nathan enthusiastically raised his hand to share his answers to word problems.

I practiced evening meditation which involved thinking in a focused way of Nathan before sleep. In dreams there were often images of being in the classroom with Nathan standing outside. He might be showing me something in the forest, but I could not quite see what it was through the window. After these dreams, I always woke up in the morning with a warm feeling.

Interestingly, when I engaged in artistic practice with Elyse, I painted myself in relation to Nathan and then imagined how Nathan would paint me in relation to him; both paintings represented me, the teacher, as smaller than the child — Nathan filled up almost the whole page. I did not intend to go deeper into analyzing my dreams, but the general conclusion was that his world is big, and although I cannot clearly see what he

is showing me, this relationship is definitely widening my own world, and in turn securing and preserving his.

In the beginning of December, I received a wonderful gift from Elyse, a gift that was remarkably timely and relevant to my work with Nathan. She offered me a four-part meditation for the four weeks leading up to Christmas and Solstice. I did this meditation beyond Christmas through the following twelve days, the “holy nights,” and it brought my work with Nathan to a whole new level of understanding and of “seeing” him. On the first week of this meditation, I imagined Nathan’s physical appearance and presented him with a mineral. I then closely watched his reaction to this mineral and the way he inwardly experienced it—its texture, shape, temperature. On the second week I did the same with a plant, on the third, I presented him with an animal; and on the third week, I combined all the previous three parts and then imagined him into the world of people.

Out of all the practices I did throughout this study, this meditation was the most revealing for me. Not only could I see Nathan more clearly, I started to get a sense of what it is like to be Nathan. I remember feeling the warmth of the smooth rock in the palms of his hands, how the warmth was spreading through his body, and how a feeling of peace came over him. Reflecting on this feeling, I remembered how Nathan gravitates towards warmth (often *human* warmth) in his daily life. He loves to hug, he loves to be in the middle of the class, surrounded by people. When we go on nature walks, he often asks to hold my hand and then leans towards me as we walk. In these moments, there is incredible warmth between us. He loves to lie on the bench in the sun. In these moments he is genuinely happy and content.

In the context of his relation to plants, I experienced Nathan’s fascination with the shape of the plant. I imagined him looking at the proportion of the petals and noticing beauty and harmony in it. I already mentioned here that in the artistic work Nathan seemed to connect with color, but his relation to form was tricky.

Interestingly, soon after this meditation, we started learning the times tables through the circles of 12, connecting the dots and creating different ornaments. Nathan was fascinated by the patterns the sequence of numbers can create. One morning, when we had gone through about half of our times tables, he entered the class and offered to show me the rest. He had figured them out at home. He often drew these circles in his free drawings, on the ground outside. He also chanted the times tables’ intervals outside, while on nature walks. His natural aptitude for math and connection with hierarchical forms were represented in so

many natural elements. This included the flowers that appeared in my meditation and dreams. These all came together and gave me insights on how to bring form and color in relation to academic concepts in a way that would appeal to Nathan.

In relation to animals, Nathan often appeared in my imagination with a baby tiger cub in his hands. This tiger cub was small, helpless without his mother, but full of inner strength, might, and potential to grow into a big and powerful animal. This became for me the picture of Nathan as a human being.

The last part of the meditation, imaginatively releasing Nathan into the world of people, was very vivid. I saw him walking forward by himself in confident steps with people surrounding him with warm presence, while slightly distant in physical spacing. This part of the meditation probably reveals something about Nathan’s future. I hope that he grows up to be a strong person, and that he has enough strength and confidence to be exactly who he is.

After the “holy nights” meditation, I felt more connected with Nathan. I felt that merely seeing him, accepting him, and loving him for who he is might be greater than having answers to all the questions I was asking. His unique personality will reveal itself more and more as we work together. There is still a great deal to learn from him.

Working with Nathan one-on-one offered insights into his relation between number sequences, shape and natural elements. The plan to do a series of artistic exercises, designed in collaboration with our art therapist, Elizabeth White, was eliminated once the pandemic set in. Unfortunately, distance learning in the third term doesn’t allow for this more focused individual work. Looking forward, these activities with Nathan could happen during third grade. I am looking forward to an even better understanding of how to serve Nathan academically and how to bring the curriculum in a balanced way for Nathan and the class.

Observing Nathan’s relationship with number sequences, form, and elements of the natural world reminded me of Daniel Tammet, a British scientist, writer, and poet with Asperger’s and savant syndrome. In his biography, *Born on a Blue Day*,⁶ Tammet describes his unique perception of number through all his senses: taste, temperature, touch, shape, etc. He writes of how he experiences the correlation between certain number sequences and natural elements. For example, he can transform number sequences into landscapes. These

6 Daniel Tammet, *Born On a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

abilities seem quite extraordinary for the non-autistic person; however, people on the autistic spectrum can often make connections that many others cannot.

As I continue working with Nathan, insights into the way he connects with number, form, and nature will deepen understanding, and through this understanding my teaching and work with him would better support him in his learning.

Findings and Conclusions

As addressed in the beginning, the primary method for this study was inner, observational, and meditative work, and I consciously chose to refrain from reading literature on the topic of autism before registering my own findings. Reflecting on this journey, this method was productive. It not only revealed many things about Nathan, but it also stimulated my personal inner growth.

Having completed steps of this study involving observation, meditation, night work, and artistic practices, the final step, instead of the first one, was to discover what was previously done in the field of anthroposophical autistic research. The first book on my list to read was *Autism: Meet Me Who I Am*⁷ by Lakshmi Prasanna and Michael Kokinos. This book aims to provide an understanding of a child with autism through deep connection. Interestingly, many of the aspects described in this book were quite similar to discoveries through my own study with Nathan. The key similarity, as the book's title suggests, is that autistic children have to be met for who they are. To achieve this, a loving connection with the child must be established—to accept them and hold them in heart and thought. Being seen, accepted for who he is, valued in his uniqueness and loved by his teachers—all these played a nourishing role in Nathan's development and helped him succeed academically.

Through my journey with Nathan it has become obvious that this Waldorf setting, as predicted by his Waldorf kindergarten teacher/camp counselor, suits him well. The authors of *Autism* further taught me that this educational approach benefits many other children with autism, including those on the low functioning autistic spectrum. Striving to meet the child in his or her essence lies at the core of Waldorf education and is crucial when working with autistic children, who are unique each in themselves.

Research revealed the happy evidence that there are increasing numbers of Waldorf schools opening around the world that work specifically with autistic children. Particularly inspiring is the Steiner School Warrah, in Australia. Their curriculum and approach, as well as their beautiful natural setting, look like an ideal place for autistic children. More autistic children around the world, with any luck, will get a chance to be Waldorf educated, whether it is in regular or in a specialized Waldorf school.

Predictable daily, monthly, and yearly rhythms are good elements for all children and are elements that over time helped Nathan make connections and understand more clearly what is taught. In Nathan's case, it helped him settle in, feel safe, and gain a clear understanding

of the expectations. Main Lesson blocks, rotating monthly, with predictable rhythms within the lesson, helped him to absorb and comprehend academic concepts and artistic pictures and to make sense of the more abstract Math concepts. For example, Nathan was not able to relate to the pictorial characters of Math such as characters of different temperaments to introduce the processes of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing; or Squirrel Nutkin, mentioned above, to help in picturing place values, borrowing, and carrying; these methods are used widely in Waldorf schools to

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help children in forming memorable connections to the abstract mathematical concepts they represent. Still, even as this did not immediately assist Nathan, it has been shown to have been of extremely helpful in educating other autistic children. However, after working with pictures and the concepts, over several months, Nathan showed a grasp of these concepts and could use the pictures productively. It has become clear that Nathan's personality and his inner world are unique, needing a unique teaching approach, that is often quite different from what would apply to other children. The uniqueness of the Waldorf curriculum allows for the flexibility to find these specific approaches needed for an autistic child. The unique case of Nathan, justifying the kind of individual study that I've been reporting here, is also a good example to how Waldorf education could meet the unique case. The specific observation, that Nathan's four bodies are not aligned with a temperament in a way we see it in most other children gives another generalized example of the benefits of an individual approach beyond the ordinary one when working with the temperaments in a class.

⁷ Lakshmi Prassana and Michael Kokinos, *Autism: Meet Me Who I Am: An Educational, Sensory and Nutritional Approach to Childhood Autism* (Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books/Anthroposophic Press, 2018).

Doing an extensive, observational, and a “tailor-made” case study of Nathan has provided me with many new insights as a teacher. Not only has it helped me in my work with Nathan, it also served as a great tool for my inner spiritual growth.

The capacities I gained as a teacher, including a more observant eye, will benefit my work with other children.

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Alla Markh. *Following a ten-year-long career as a Russian and English teacher, Alla joined Halton Waldorf School, in Ontario, in 2016 as a grade one and two teacher in the optional afternoon program. She fell in love with the school and Waldorf pedagogy and decided to proceed with studies in Anthroposophy and Waldorf teacher training. She holds a Master’s degree in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Greenwich and she completed a course in Language Teaching at the University of Oxford. She is currently the fourth grade class teacher at Halton Waldorf School.*