

# INTRODUCTION

by Jenny McCarthy

MOST PEOPLE IN THE AUTISM COMMUNITY have heard my story of how I fought to get my son back from autism. For those of you new to my story, I'd like to share with you the events that led us down this path that an increasing number of families are experiencing right now.

Evan was two and a half years old when I found him in his crib convulsing and struggling to breathe. I had no idea it was a seizure until the paramedics began talking about how to stop it. I was hoping it was a fluke, but my nightmare had only just begun. Three weeks later Evan started seizing again, but this time he wasn't struggling to breathe. His body just lay lifeless as foam started to come out of his mouth. I prayed to God to make it stop, but it didn't. Minutes later his body went blue and his eyes dilated. I knew he had just gone into cardiac arrest. As I begged God to bring him back to me, I felt this overwhelming feeling of calming energy. If it could have spoken, it would have said, "Everything is going to be okay." I trusted this energy. I felt that this experience happening before my very eyes had a purpose. After two minutes the paramedics revived him. The "calming energy" was right. He came back. Everything seemed okay. Unfortunately, it was short lived. Evan seized on and off for the next seven hours. The doctors didn't know what to make of it; they told me he had epilepsy. But I knew there was more to it. Everything in my mommy radar was screaming, "Keep looking, there's more." So, I hunted for the very best neurologist, someone who would give me insights into my unanswered questions. He took one look at Evan and said, "I'm sorry; your son has autism."

I died in that moment. All of my future images of Evan getting married or hugging me on his way to college broke into a million pieces. I recalled all of the oddities Evan had had that had led up to this point. I had thought the flapping of his hands or staring out the window for hours made him "special." I had no idea it was autism.

When I asked if there was anything that could be done, the doctor had little hope to offer me. "Some progress is being made with some speech and behavioral therapies, but that's about all," he said. I didn't want to hear that. I wanted to know WHY he had autism and I wanted to know HOW to get him completely back. Leaving the doctor's office that day, I knew I was about to embark on the biggest mission of my life. I was going to get my boy back. I had no idea how, but I trusted my instincts and knew they would always point me in the right direction.

I went online and learned about the gluten-free, casein-free diet. I listened to my instincts and started Evan on it, along with some vitamins. Within two weeks of implementing the diet and vitamins, his eye contact was better and his language doubled! I was out of my mind with joy. It was working! But when I called Evan's doctor to tell him about the progress, he told me it was all a fluke—that diet and vitamins don't really have an effect. I was shocked. I just told him that I was witnessing huge progress without having

implemented any other therapies. He ignored my findings, but I didn't care (yet). I kept digging and found communities that were healing kids with autism. I found a doctor who specialized in healing kids through diet, detox, and supplements. His name was Dr. Jerry Kartzinel. I contacted him and begged him to take my son as a patient. He had no idea that I had any celebrity status. He was taking me on only as a mom of a child with autism.

Within a year of following Dr. Jerry's protocol and intensive behavioral and speech therapies, Evan recovered from autism. I learned that not all kids recover, but MOST of them improve dramatically from treatment. And I learned there are simple things we can all do to prevent this from happening in the first place.

Since I began this journey, I have spoken to nearly 100,000 moms face-to-face and have received letters and emails from around the world. We all have the same story of how our children regressed into autism. How could I possibly stand back from this day forward and be a witness to what's happening to our kids in our lifetime? I can't. I walk through grocery stores and airports where mothers approach me with tears in their eyes as they talk to me about their autistic children. The day Evan had that seizure and went into cardiac arrest I knew that I had a mission in this lifetime and I wasn't going to stop until the calming energy was right. "Everything is going to be okay." That's my mission now. To make sure ALL of our children are going to be okay.

# INTRODUCTION

By Jerry Kartzinel, M.D.

MY WIFE AND I had three very healthy boys but felt that one more would complete our family. We decided to adopt a special child who may have had a difficult time being adopted due to the fact that his biological mother was a drug abuser. I knew there were going to be medical problems just because of her methamphetamine (along with other substances) usage. But I'm a pediatrician. Who would be better suited to take care of a child with this kind of background?

We wanted to be in some small way helpful to this world. It reminds me of the story where there were thousands and thousands of starfish that had just washed up on shore and this little boy was on the beach throwing each starfish that he could back into the water. A man came up to him and said, "Son, it's not going to impact this whole huge beach. This is not going to have any effect on this big group of starfish." And the little boy looked at him and said, "You might be right, but it affects this starfish." And he threw it back into the ocean. I know I can't take care of all of the world's children, but I can take care of at least this one. Joshua is our starfish.

Joshua was developing and thriving normally until I gave him his MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. You see, as a pediatrician, I felt it was very important to vaccinate children against diseases. I made sure that Joshua received, in a timely manner, all of his vaccines starting right after birth with the hepatitis B vaccine. He was around four months of age when he started getting ear infections, rashes, and even required a spinal tap to make sure he did not have spinal meningitis (he was really sick!)—and all of this followed his four-month vaccines. I was still clueless that his immune system was slowly breaking down. His ear infections continued to come and go. Then, at fourteen months of age, while he was coming off of an antibiotic, I gave him his MMR. Over the next two weeks he lost everything. My wife was the one who saw the change. She said, "You know, he's not been the same since you gave him the MMR." I gave the typical male response: "What?" And then I started to think about it and realized that she was right. This was 1997. I had no clue this was autism. Pediatrics in general had no clue. Very little was written about these kids in the early 90s and certainly nothing had been written in the 80s.

Josh developed some serious medical consequences following the MMR. He had large amounts of foul-smelling diarrhea going up his back and down his the leg, he lost eye contact, he no longer listened and, and his nights became sleepless. He also didn't respond to behavioral correction. You could not keep him out of the dog's water. There was no connection with us or with anything that mattered. He was cranky and nothing pleased him. Transitions became difficult...even transitioning from sleep to wakefulness! Over the course of eight weeks, he lost all of his language.

He developed obsessive-compulsive behavior, which was primarily the urge to look into other people's garages. So he would figure out a way to escape the house, but he would run only as far as the next open garage, not into traffic, thank God. He would just sit there rocking, looking at the garage's contents until we realized he was missing.

Two months after the MMR shot I had a clue it was autism. I didn't want to share it with my wife at that point because I was trying to figure out if it was a late manifestation of the drug exposures that he'd had in utero from his birth mom. But I knew what was going on and then I finally shared it with my wife.

She said, "That's very interesting. What are *you* going to do about it? Obviously, it was from the vaccine because prior to the MMR, he was doing just fine." And then, she landed the bomb: "You broke him, you fix him!" I replied, "Well, dear, we really don't know how to fix this." And she said, "Well, you'll figure it out. Go for it." Now realize, she said a whole lot more, and there were some significant emotions shared at that time... Need I say more?

The medical community doesn't get that these kids have medical complications such as ongoing bowel issues that present with chronic constipation, chronic diarrhea, and reflux. They are quick to label the symptoms they see, such as the constipation as "willful stool withholding behavior" or the diarrhea as "toddler's diarrhea." It seems that excuses are far easier to come by, especially if you only have a ten-minute appointment. But basically, it boils down to this: Doctors (and teachers, I might add) are being taught today on Autism from textbooks that are outdated. They have not been able to keep up with the current trends. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a report/toolkit called *Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians* in for the first time in November of 2007! There had never been a tool like this for doctors. In other words, they finally caught on to the fact that their board-certified pediatricians had no clue how to diagnose and manage autism.

Today, the number of children being affected by autism is staggering. It is going to require a major paradigm shift of thought for the medical community to consider that it may have caused, through mandatory vaccine programs, a massive iatrogenic (medicine-induced) disease called autism and most probably contributed to the huge increase in children being diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, allergies, asthma, and learning disorders, just to name a few. It completely violates the "first, do no harm" mentality that is ingrained in most physicians. They have literally exchanged one possible epidemic (such as pertussis or measles) for this very real, lifelong epidemic of autism. It is just too horrible to consider. So it isn't. Those who do know about this at the CDC—and I believe there are those who really do know—will, well, have to answer, eventually to a higher authority.

Other people take their children to the doc and so they can blame somebody. Moms will say, "It was that stupid doctor's fault." And then they could follow that with, "I should have known better." But I'm actually the one who slipped the needle into my son. I did it

to him. I changed his life forever in doing that. But you can't go through life regretting things. You can't go through life being angry with yourself and telling yourself, "I shouldn't have done it," because it doesn't help things. We've all wished we could roll back the clock so we didn't do this or that or another thing, but we can't. I've always been a positive person. The glass has always been half full not empty in my eyes. So, since I'm stuck with this, how do I make the best of it? Not only did I want to make the most of Josh's life, I wanted to learn how I could help other children with autism. And that's where we're at today. How can I help other people? I have to walk this road, anyway, with Josh and I'm going to do it hand in hand with him. But if I'm going to go down this road, I'm not going to be angry and upset with myself. I'm going to use my energy to make the best of my situation and help other people who have been pushed down this road unwillingly.

**Excerpt from HEALING AND PREVENTING AUTISM by Jenny McCarthy and Jerry Kartzinel, M.D. © 2009. Published by Dutton, a member of Penguin Group (USA). Excerpted with permission from the publisher. All Rights Reserved.**