

# The Drop.

Featuring:

- **Three guest contributors from Canada**
- **Insightful articles**

## **BLOSSOMING AMBITIONS**

Students embrace new beginnings and future dreams.

The contributors to this magazine all have autism and are non-speaking or have limited speech. They have developed the skills to spell their thoughts, one letter at a time, on a letter-board.

## **MISSION & VISION**

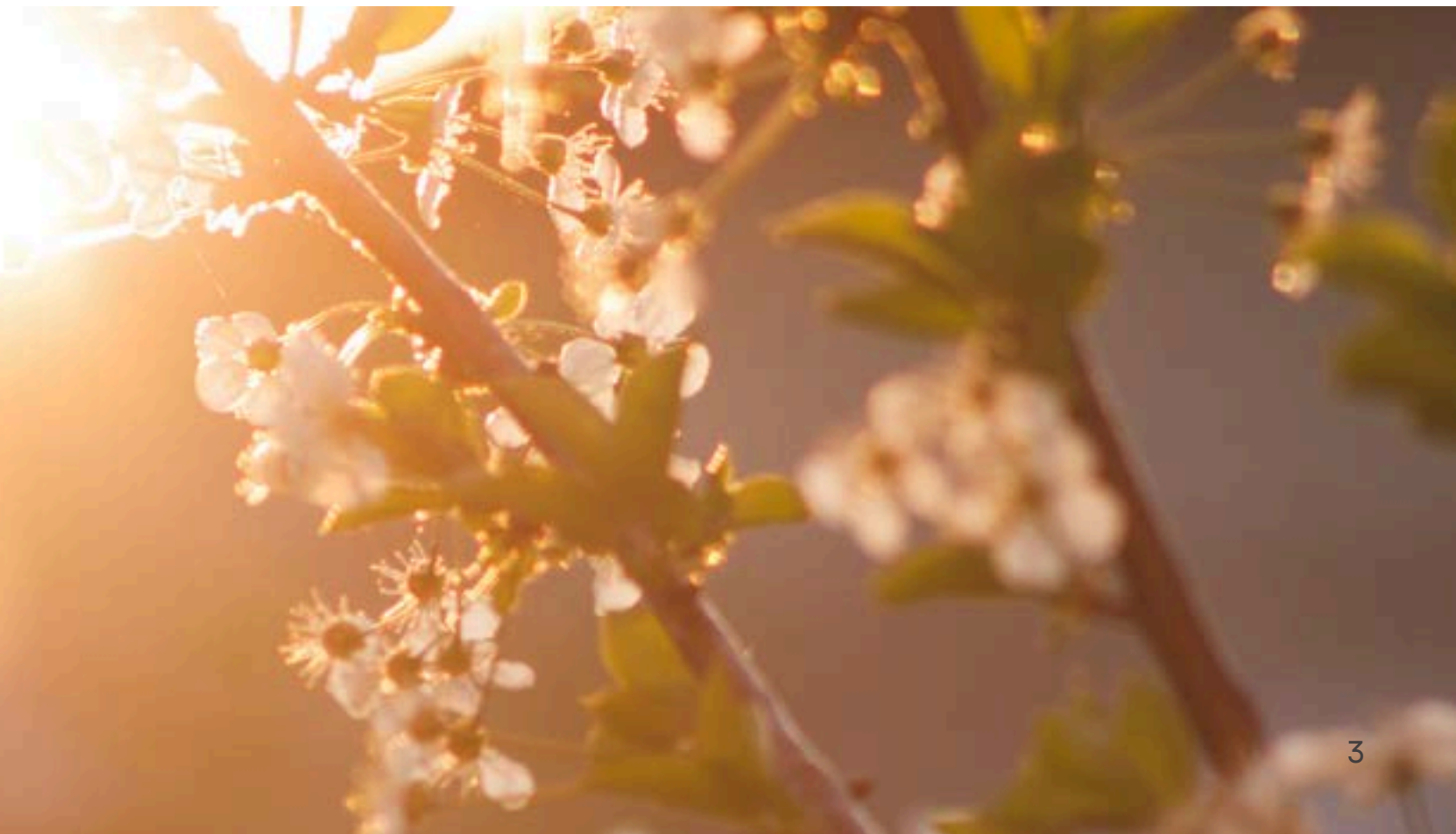
**The mission of this magazine is to provide a place for autistic people, without purposeful speech, to share their great ideas and insights.**

**The intention is for this to be positive and fun, as well as informative and encouraging. We hope you will enjoy reading this, please share with others so we can make ripples that lead to changes in how we are viewed.**

**-Ellen O'Shea**

# CONTENTS

<b>The Contributors</b>	4
<b>Welcome Message</b>	9
<b>Spellers share hopes for 2024</b>	12
<b>Life Long Learning</b>	16
<b>Poetry</b>	19
<b>The Hidden Rooms in my Mind</b>	24
<b>Independent Teaching Generates Independent Kids</b>	29



# THE CONTRIBUTORS



## CHARLES

Hello, my name is Charles and I am terrifically proud to be part of The Drop. I love The Drop and I am excited to add another voice to the non speaking community.



## CHARLIE

Hello, I am the one who took ages to develop my pointing skills but now there is no stopping me. I am over the moon to be a contributor. Hope to inspire and be inspired.



## TOM

Hello I'm Tom. Since starting RPM my world has opened up to more possibilities. I am so happy to make contributions so that people realise that there's more to me and others. I am so keen to develop my poetry as poems are great at sharing messages. I plan to share one each issue.

## PADDY

I am Paddy and I am the youngest of the group. I am happy to share my insights and participate in this magazine. Teaching others is something I'd love to do when I'm older so I need practise.





## **JACK**

**I'm Jack. I love to be part of groups where I can contribute to something bigger than myself. Having this magazine is challenging me to think about how I can help lead change for lots of quiet voices. I look forward to taking part.**

## **POSY**

**Hi, I am Posy and, like the other contributors, I am often misjudged because of my baffling behaviours. Having autism forces me to create mammoth routines! Each issue of this magazine will represent that, amongst the routines, I've been able to purposefully focus and contribute to society.**



## **JOHNNY**

**Hello my name is Johnny. I like to make films and play with people. I also enjoy making stories which I hope will be made into films. I am happy sharing my stories, thoughts and struggles with people who might benefit from them.**

## MANDEEP

**My name is Mandeep. Could anyone have imagined changing people's views about autism ten years ago? Managing to dream about changing the world is now a possibility and I'm happy to be involved in the magazine.**



## CHRIS. R

**Hi I'm Chris. I realise that people's views about autism can often be based on our appearances and what society shares about us. I am excited to share my experiences as a non-verbal autistic man who has enormous sensory challenges, rigidity and obsessions. I really hope my contributions can help to make a different world for autistic people.**

## ELLEN

**Hello, I am Ellen. I am a young adult making my first splash into the literary world. I am autistic and have the mouth of a parrot! It repeats familiar phrases and is sudden and loud. I can spread my ideas more easily by spelling on my RPM letterboard. I am so pleased to be part of this new magazine as words have a power to them and we can use them for good.**





**We welcome the spellers from Canada to this edition of The Drop. It was great to read your contributions.**

## **OLIVER**

**Hi, I am Oliver, a speller from Calgary. I love trucks, being outside and Saturdays with my dad. This is my first publication!**



## **LUKE**

**I am Luke of [thisisluke.ca](http://thisisluke.ca).**

**I am a newly open speller with a passion for writing and advocacy. I am thrilled to be participating in “The Drop”.**

# CRAIG

I am Craig, a 24 year old from Calgary, Alberta. I am also known as the “wordle wizard”. The Wordle is a fun puzzle that challenges my brain. It brings out my competitive side and I love watching others' reactions when I win. I also love writing poetry, riding my bike, and hiking. I am excited to see my writing in print!





# Thank you to the Neurofeedback Brain Training for sponsoring this issue!



**A brain training device that can improve emotional regulation, sleep and focus.**

**Easy to use and results can be achieved in as little as a month.**



Home Rentals Available  
Non invasive, no effort  
calming results



**Neurofeedback**  
Brain Training



[www.neurofeedbackbraintraining.co.uk](http://www.neurofeedbackbraintraining.co.uk)

**PADDY CURRAN**

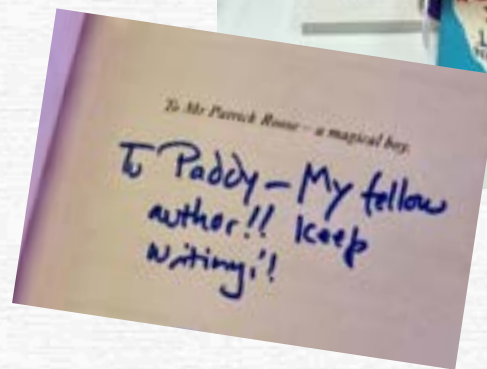
**WELCOMES  
YOU.**



As an autistic and a non-speaking person, I can sometimes have misperceptions made about my intellect. At one stage, the nights tended to feel so restless and the days felt pointless. I am an easily pleased autistic person with many interests and stand to prove my intelligence to the world.

As I track progress and assess achievements, I am able to reflect with sentiment and pride. Reaping the rewards of my life, I end up trying new and exciting ventures. That inspired the theme of this edition of the magazine: the hopes for future endeavours and the hopes for a successful life.

I can't perfectly describe the moment I met my hero, the author Frank Cotterell Boyce as I struggle sometimes with memory recall but I know it was unforgettable, ironically. As I estimated, he was a kind man and I felt at ease with him. I am honoured to have read some of his books and hope he returns the favour. I would love to hear your responses and feedback.



I have achieved my main goal of people teaching me the ways of writing but new goals replace old ones and they always will. I am rotating into a new version of me which terrifies and excites me. I am excited to ask your hopes and dreams and hope they come true.

# HOPES FOR 2024

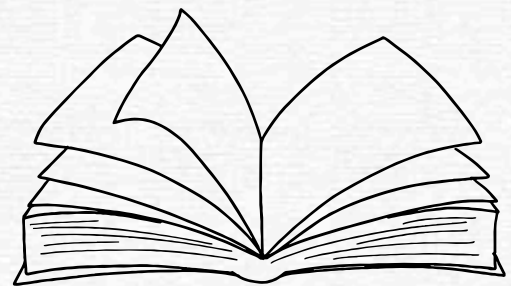
## CHRIS R

- 1) To think about trampolining skills I could learn.
- 2) To hike more hills and find more cafes.
- 3) Open my mind to different people supporting me. Part of me is wanting things to stay the same and part of me realises the the need for change.



# **CHARLIE**

**I find stories  
terrific to listen to.  
Do you think I  
could try to make  
one ?**



# **JOHNNY**

**I believe I  
am gearing  
up for a big  
change...**



# TOM



My personal goal over this year is to tell my story more so I can get my ideas and insights out there.

**SMART GOALS:**  
**S - Specific**  
**M - Measurable**  
**A - Achievable**  
**R - Relevant**  
**T - Timebased**

After learning about SMART goals, I made this more specific: I can spell out a mix of nine short articles about my life.

# CHARLES

My aims for this year are to learn to become confident in using a keyboard. I have seen my friend do it. His mum said I could manage it. So that is my main aim.

So the rest is more of what I love doing, making and selling my craft.



I am being confirmed into the hand of God next week and I hope to continue to advocate to all, that people with autism who are unable to speak are able to lead full lives and should be given the same opportunities as everyone else.

Simply to give them the same communication opportunity that will seemingly benefit them to relate their wishes.





**JACK**

# **LIFE LONG LEARNING**



Lifelong learning can make the life you have much better. I always develop new interests from seeing places and becoming as a well-educated person. Growing up shouldn't mean that learning stops. Our brains need a lot of stimulation to help mental skills.

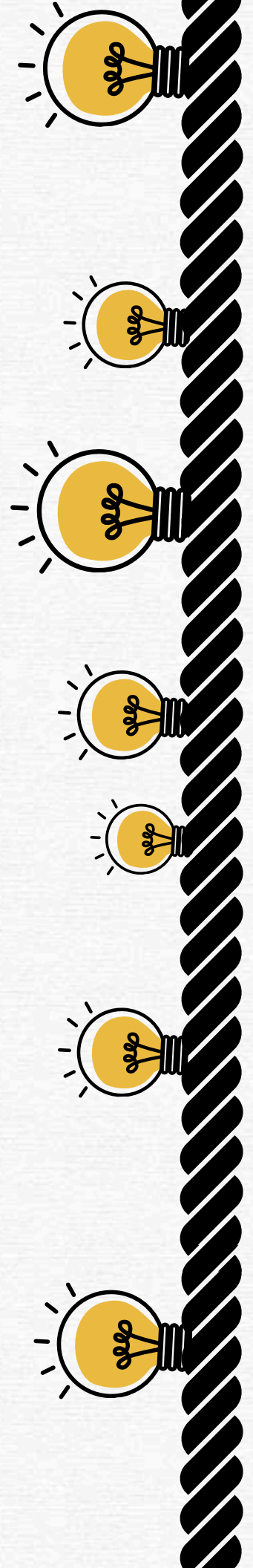
I am happy when I am learning about an interest because autistic people can't always indicate that they find topics interesting. I am open to looking at new ideas and finding the interest in everything.



You need to have a balance between the types of learning that you do. Having an education that has focussed on helping me in many ways has allowed me to have awareness to grow in different ways. I am enjoying finding out about my brain, history, the world and rarities like natural disasters.

I also cook and try to develop life skills so I can be independent. I am getting better at cooking. Doing it every day brings me fun and practise. Going to different clubs helps me to add skills and activities; art and sports takes me to a challenge I can work on and also lets me be around more people. I'm finding a mix of stuff works best for me.

I am daring to be a curious person who sees the interest in the complex world. The purpose of my learning is to see how far I can get. I am turning into an adult who values learning. Tapping into my brain gives me things to think about.

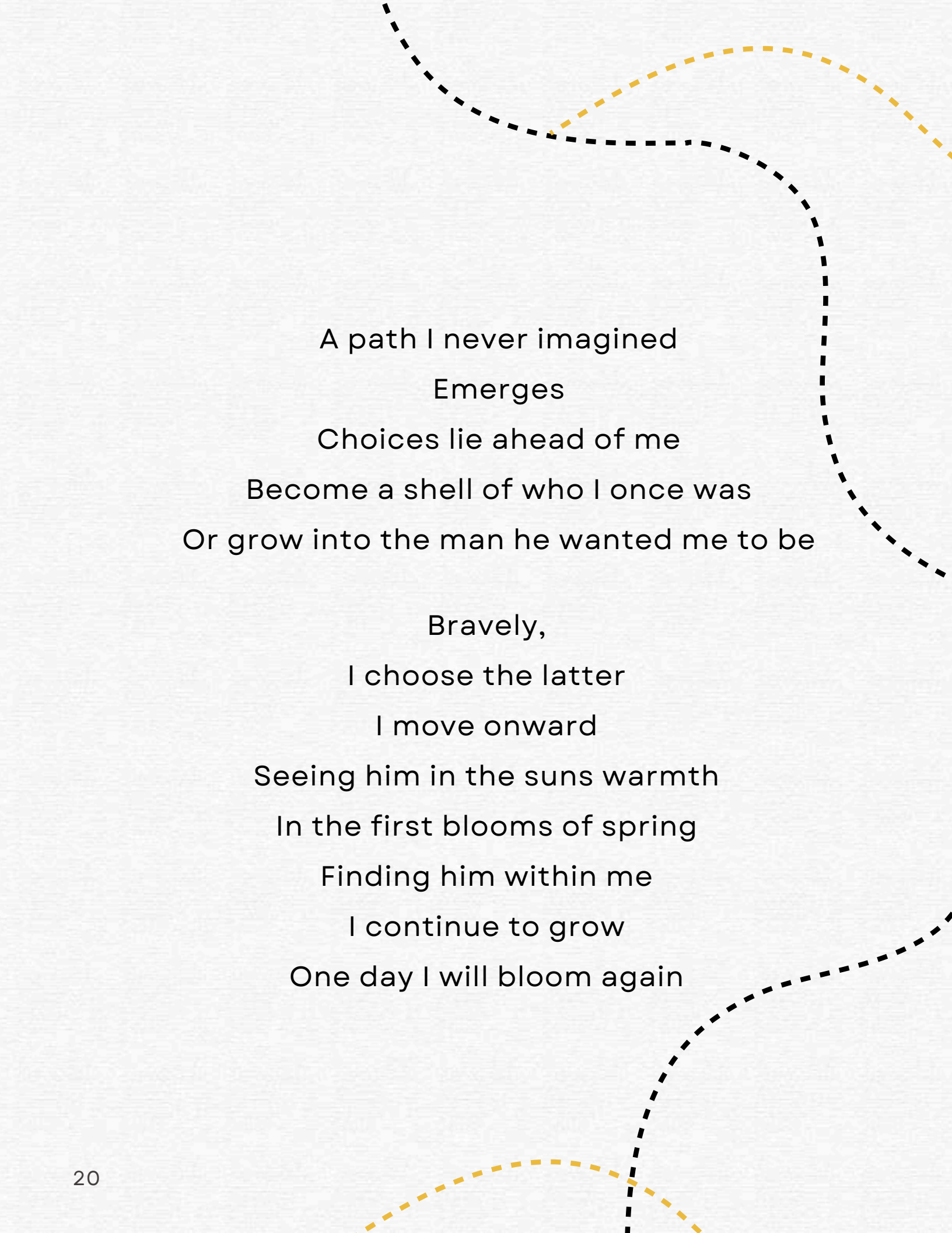


**CRAIG**

# FINDING ME AGAIN

*Craig would like to dedicate this poem to his late father, Mark, who was his best friend.*



The page features decorative dashed lines in black and yellow. A black dashed line starts at the top left, curves down and right, then turns sharply down and left. A yellow dashed line starts at the top right, curves down and left, then turns sharply down and right. Another yellow dashed line is at the bottom, curving up and right. A black dashed line is at the bottom right, curving up and left.

A path I never imagined  
Emerges  
Choices lie ahead of me  
Become a shell of who I once was  
Or grow into the man he wanted me to be

Bravely,  
I choose the latter  
I move onward  
Seeing him in the sun's warmth  
In the first blooms of spring  
Finding him within me  
I continue to grow  
One day I will bloom again

**OLIVER**

# **BRANCHING OUT**

I have sprouted this year.

Growing tall as a poplar tree, I branch into new horizons.

I am keen to try new things, maybe finally mastering riding a bike.

I am also pushing boundaries, I am a teen after all.

My biggest goal this year is to be an independent typer.

My peers are my inspiration!



# ELLEN

## INTO A NEW ROAD I GO



Be courageous,  
creep forward,  
unknown pathways await.

Voice silent,  
wilful obsessing,  
sanity is beyond the gate.

Into a new road I go,  
cautious and slow.  
Imagine the new life,  
free to grow.

Searching for a loud and vibrant place,  
autistic spellers taking their minds and bodies to fulfilment.

Enjoying each other's company,

await,

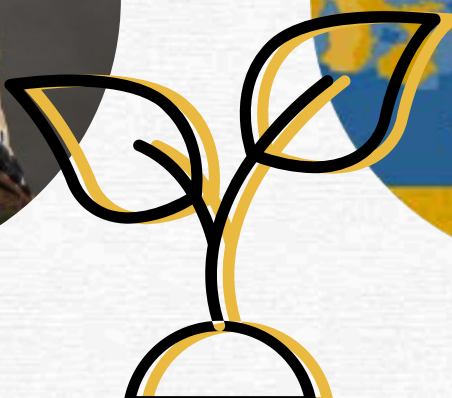
await,

await.

**LUKE**

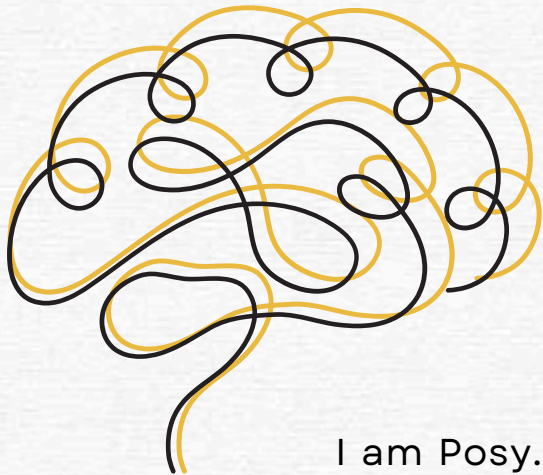
# MY STORY TO TELL

A corner has turned  
A new chapter begins  
Soaring with potential  
Something within me awakens  
A seed to nurture  
A story to tell  
I move onward  
Admiring the beauty of change  
Feeling the pain of letting go  
Leaning into my path  
I trust in myself



# POSY

May I tell you that I have had a difficult time recently so, hear my story that I created a few years ago on the subject of my mind.



## THE HIDDEN ROOMS IN MY MIND

I am Posy. I cannot speak with my voice; instead, I spell out words on a letter-board. I am autistic so many people assume I am intellectually disabled and this is often made worse by my body's inability to show my level of understanding. Trying to get my body to respond is impossible. My hands and mouth constantly look to my mind for guidance, but let me down with impulsive, obsessive and emotional actions. The hardest thing about my autism is what people cannot see. I am constantly thinking yet no sign of this is shown. It is a waste to make the assumption I am not language capable. I am intelligent but only in my mind.

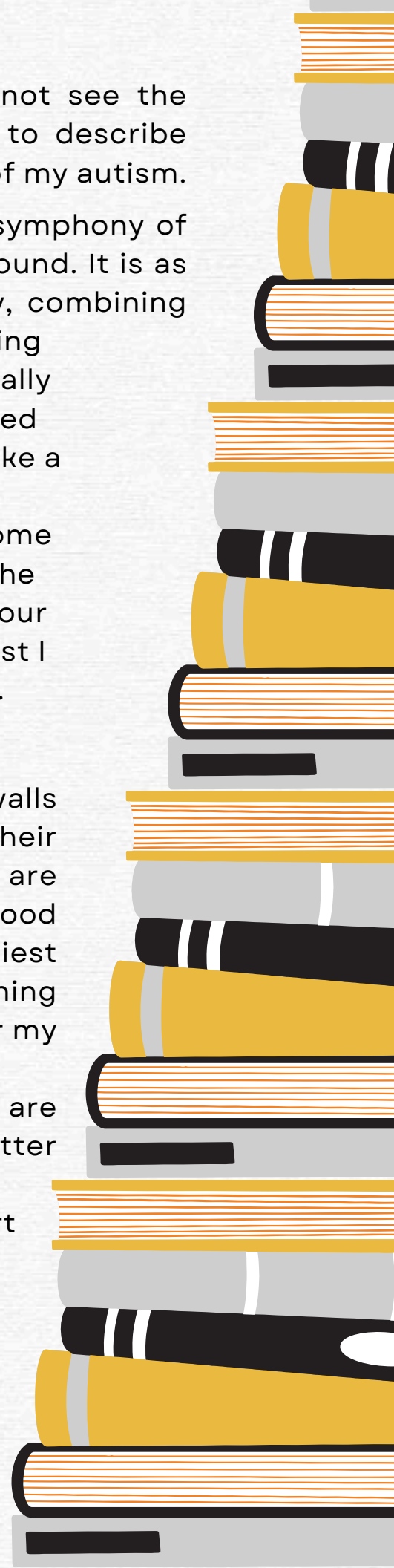
I imagine there to be a house in my mind, with each room representing a different aspect of me and my life. There are rooms that I enjoy being in and others that make life extremely difficult for me. On the outside if you look at my obsessive behaviours, you may not realise I am trapped in a room I cannot



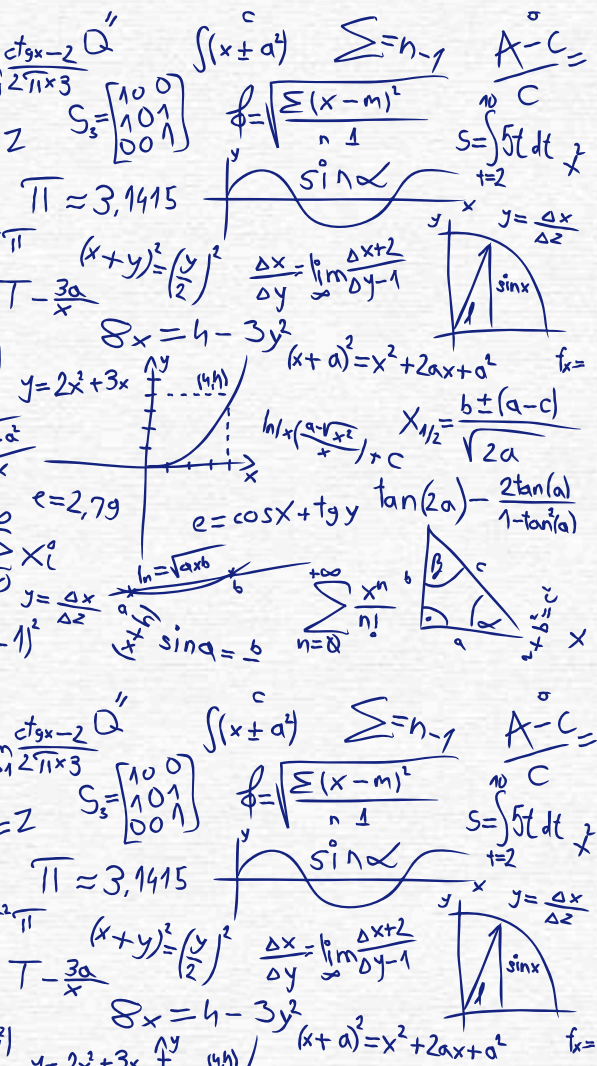
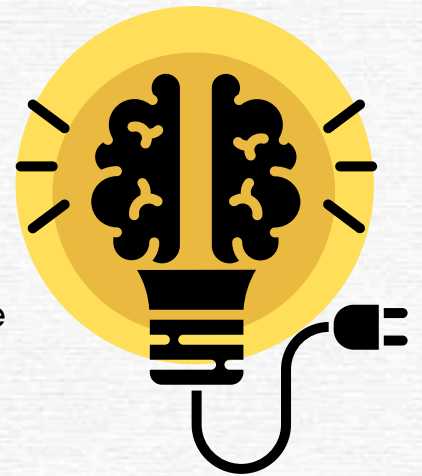
escape from. When I am peaceful you may not see the room I am mentally in but what I am about to describe should give you an insight into the complexity of my autism.

As you enter my mind, the hallway is a visual symphony of colours, lines and shapes. Everything swims around. It is as if the walls are oceans of colour and imagery, combining and separating all of the time. Seeing this is losing yourself in the swirls so the only way to not visually drown is to turn the lights off and not get isolated in the imagery. The long winding hallway, a lot like a maze, leads off to many rooms and narrower hallways. Each door is unique and represents some of the moods, emotions and challenges inside the room to which they lead. Let me take you on a tour to give you an insight into my complex mind. First I will take you to the relaxing stimulation rooms...

In the magnificently large linguistic room, all walls are hidden with skyscraper shelves filled to their limits with books. The beautiful books are knowledge, words and love for stories, so it is good to escape here. The linguistic room is the neediest of them all as it relies on visitors to keep it learning new words. Please speak to me with respect for my age and language capability. It needs a consistent stream of mindful words which are interesting, inspiring and help me to better articulate my thoughts. When I am not exposed to new words and thoughts, all the shelves start to shrink, with the room eventually turning into an empty shell; what sadness would fill the empty space then? Language feeds all parts of this hungry house so do not forget about it. Talk to me and know you are helping my linguistic room stay full.



Across the hallway is the general knowledge room. A light as bright as the sun blinds you as you enter, and your eyes struggle to adapt as you look to the floor which you realise is a map of the world. As you take in the information, you notice the light begins to dim, allowing you to see different areas of the room, with photos, posters and TV screens, showing documentaries, lining the wall. There is a study table at the centre of the room which expects the visitors to bring new information like current studies and new stories during each visit. All the room wants is to keep learning, no matter what is happening outside, so you can always know that the light is on. It excites me intellectually to be in this room. The poor people that never learn anything must be so bored. Keep telling me new things so I am stimulated.



If you continue along the corridor, you will see the logical room. A hundred locks decorate the metal door, which clicks as you push it open. Immediately, thousands of small computer screens turn on and numbers light up the screens, glowing an electric blue. The important decisions you need to make reside in the room, such as what you need to prepare for, how to be calm and thinking about pros and cons. You know you must only use logic to make the decisions; your emotions are left at the door. Life seems straight forward in this room and it is easy to forget how complicated it can be, especially in the other rooms. Logic is a beautiful peaceful sensation and the more time in this room the better. Outwardly I should look calm

when in this room. To help me stay in this room talk logically about information and ask any questions that would require me to reason and think logically. Locks cover the room with all the ideas. They are golden locks that have no key; only inspiration and fulfilment can open the precious locks. When you have fulfilled all of your rooms' needs, the locks pop open, and promising balls of light escape from the room and race to find you. The needs are to feel stimulated in all of the previous rooms. In order for ideas to come, you must first feel stimulated, creative, knowledgeable and expressive.

Dotted in between these rooms are other rooms that have a negative impact, trying to get your attention as you walk past. You will be able to see when I am in these rooms as I turn into an emotional and obsessive person.

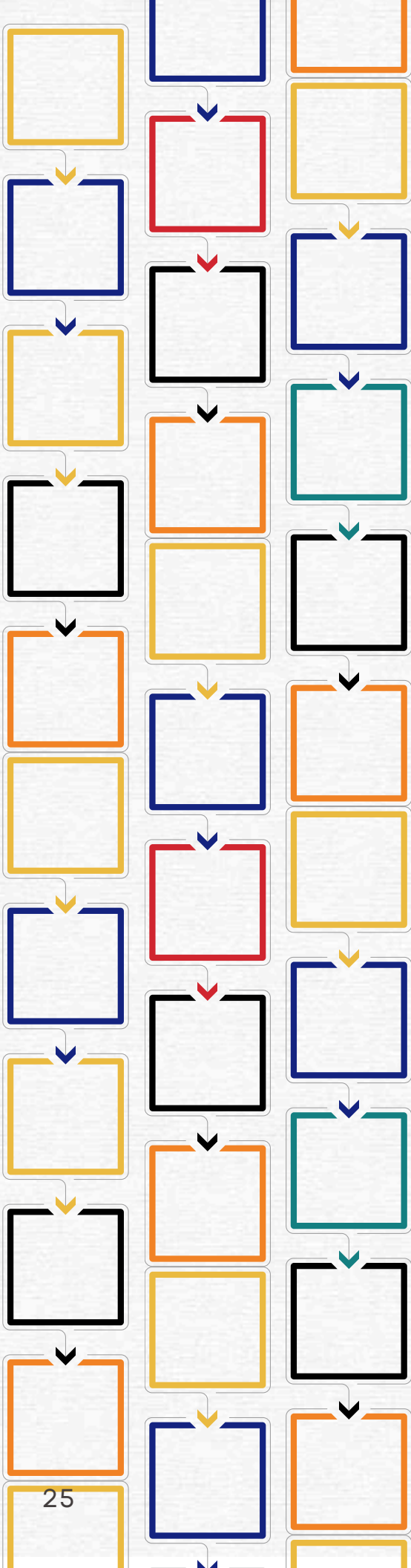
When you look around the house you will see many impulse rooms dotted around, hiding in the shadows and lurking in between other rooms. The door frames are as dark as a cave and there are no doors, just pitch black. As you walk past, the darkness sucks you in before you have chance to escape. It is an empty space full of invisible demands that only let you leave once they have been completed. Anywhere is better than the bottom of this cave but the impulses grow more and more as you get deeper so you must try to leave. Like the obsessive room, once you are in its impossible to leave without a fight with yourself. Taking repeated hits to the chin is necessary in order to leave the darkness.



Once you are out it is impossible to not get sucked into another hole of madness. Many events take place in these rooms without anyone realising on the outside.

Another room to avoid is the obsession room. Many years have been spent within their walls obsessing over sequences and rituals. Sequences usually have logic to find. However, this room is for emotions only and it is crucial that you obediently follow the sequences, so you do not get anxious. Ticking items off one at a time is all that your senses can focus on as your whole system avoids meltdown. It is a completely consuming task that you need to put all of your effort into before you are able to leave. Abide by the rules in order to be calm again.

**The message I have for you is to keep teaching my brain in spite of my outward appearance. I need your support to make the most of the learning rooms and reduce my time in the other rooms that, if I get caught in, take over my day.**



## MANDEEP

# INDEPENDENT TEACHING GENERATES INDEPENDENT KIDS

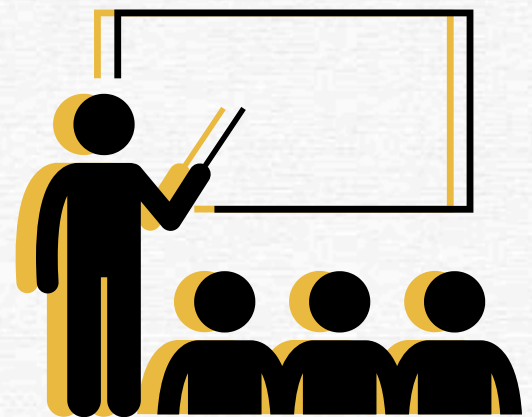
Only bright children are mathematicians, or is that a myth?

Children of all abilities deserve an education.

How do you explain to a student a complex mathematical theory if their brain is artistic instead? How do you explain history to a student who doesn't like dates and figures? See for yourself. Enter any mainstream school and you'll see a student struggling to keep up.

Instead of receiving any help, the student is categorised as the class idiot and not seen as intelligent, not seen at all.

So is the student worthy of an education if they're not ticking all the inaccessible and endless boxes which are set for them? Yes of course they are.



They are rooting for their future, but the trees are fallen, and the twigs are broken. So, what chance of reaching their goals do they have?

Young tyrants and bad behaviour - that's how children who struggle are branded and it limits their success. They are storing enormous amounts of suffering and hardship. Total and horrid shame they have to live with, all because of a system that is no better than a maths test they failed.

Hardened stares and minor tarnished nods of enjoyment as kids spill

out of the classroom into the rest of their lives.

They may sense a feeling associated with channelling their inner student - average.

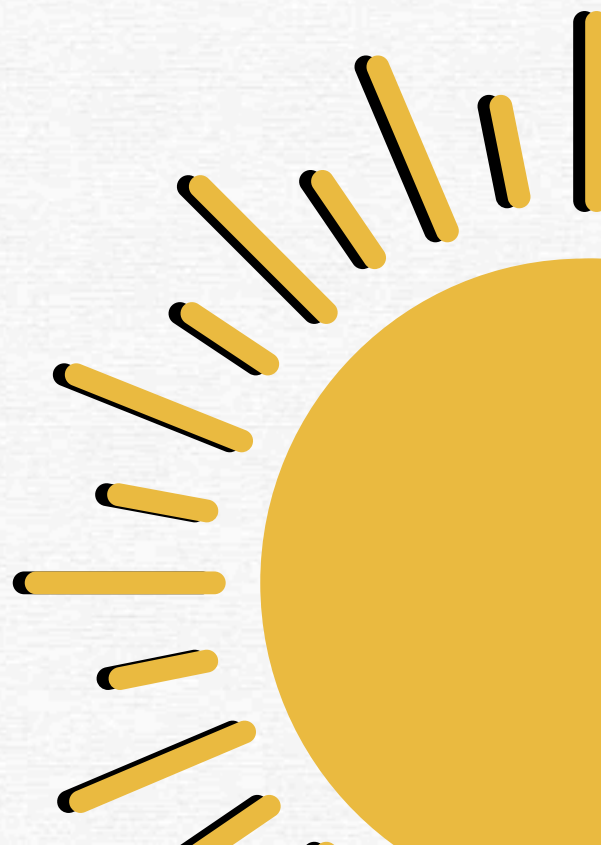
And how can they thrive in an environment designed for just one set of people? An attendance crisis for those with a neurotypical brain challenges the stereotype and tells us how serious this problem is. The rates have dropped to just 92% attendance so why don't students want to go to school?



A lack of support is no surprise. Tenuous hours of work, tenuous hours wasted on care that does not help the kids that really need it. No money, no way of emotionally supporting those in need. Yes, the SEN child tends to access slightly more support and recognition and the students who, undiagnosed and afraid, cannot receive only the tiniest minute level of support they desperately need.

Teachers are left to handle so many students who are struggling without any guidance or tools to help. How and why has this gone on so long? The support in schools is diabolical.

May we hope for a better and brighter future for student and teacher alike.



**If you're able to support the missions of this magazine, we'd love your help!**

**Whether it's helping to spread the word, being a sponsor, or covering printing costs! If you have any feedback, we'd love to hear from you too.**



**[admin@tefautism.co.uk](mailto:admin@tefautism.co.uk)**

**Please put 'The Drop' as the subject header**

**The  
Drop.**