

GiGi 's Story

When did you meet Dr. Serrano?

We met Maria at a very important moment in Gigi's life. She was almost 5 years old. It was one of those moments that you call "God's gifts", because she appeared out of the blue. I had always asked God to send me people like her. One day someone told us that there was a doctor in town who knew a lot about autism and if we wanted to meet her. Obviously, we said YES! At that time, we did not understand why she had landed in our lives. Later, Maria moved to Guanajuato only to be with her. Can you believe it? It was then when we started to see a different Gigi, as Maria started to notice things nobody had seen before.

When did Gigi begin with epileptic seizures?

When she was 8 months old. She was first diagnosed with West Syndrome, a rare and unusual syndrome in infants typically characterized by epileptic spasms and psychomotor delays. After that, she was diagnosed with Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome which is a form of childhood epilepsy characterized by frequent epileptic attacks of various kinds and commonly accompanied with developmental delays and behavioral and psychological problems. Now we know she has Sclerosis Tuberosa. Fortunately, we met a Naturopathic doctor who stopped the epileptic spasms to the point that the neurologist determined, in view of EEG results, that the syndrome was in full remission. Today she suffers from very mild and occasional epileptic episodes and we returned to allopathic medicine. She is under control. However, allopathic medicine was not helpful at first. At the end of the day, one must try whatever is best for the child.

The first two years were very difficult. Not only for the seizures but also because meds kept her very passive, and sleepy. I did not leave her sight as she used to have up to 48 seizures a day. She also was under a very strict diet. Before we met the naturopathic doctor, she was taking lots of powerful anticonvulsants. Gigi was under 24/7 care that included many visits to the pediatrician, neurologist and the emergency room. She also had many other therapies. With the new medications and without so many epileptic episodes, Gigi began to gain weight and her immune system improved.

What changes did Dr. Serrano brought to Gigi?

Many! To begin with she told us that Gigi was not autistic, although from her behavior you would think she was. Although we knew, this filled us with joy. She did not know at the time that Gigi was epileptic and that the doctor had also told us that Gigi was not autistic but had some autistic traits. She was able to tell us that without this information, and that impressed us a lot. As she began working with her, she started to see things that made us to change her habits and the routine we had at home.

Maria moved from the USA and stayed in our home for a while to understand and work with Gigi 24/7. She is a very powerful person who transmits a lot of energy and a deep sense of security. She taught us how to work with Gigi in what would become a very deep and loving connection with our daughter. Before she was not connected at all to us as she was always distant in her own world.

Can you briefly compare Dr. Serrano's intervention with those of other specialists?

It's very simple. Maria works not only with all the knowledge and experience she has acquired with every child, but with intuition and love. Most specialists care for their patients during the therapy session and most of the time they follow their line of intervention, regardless of its effectiveness. It is not easy to find the right

intervention for your child. Finding someone who is versed in most of the treatments available and is creative enough to adapt or create ways to empower and impact your child is just pure luck. Maria takes care of Gigi all the time even when she is not with her.

Have you seen improvements in Gigi?

Many! She is another girl. She was not potty-trained, now she goes independently. She also does many things on her own. She now watches television like other kids do. For her, TV was just a box of lights and sounds for self-stimulation. Now she even has her own favorite channel (although Maria lets her watch very little TV).

Gigi's coordination was terrible when Maria met her. She could not sit still in one place at a time, and if she did she was stimming using her fingers almost at a hypnotic state. Today she walks through spaces and notices things and does not bump into animals or people. In addition, she has started to say words and short sentences. Language is flourishing.

Before, she did not feel pain and now she does. Every day she is becoming more aware of herself and the world around her. Maria taught me to take one step at a time and to enjoy Gigi's small victories. I have my husband's support. He is a fundamental part of this journey. The two of us share the joy and the challenges of parenting a child with special needs.

Any advice you have for other families who are going through the same situation?

Let your heart be your guide and do not let anybody tell you that there is something you cannot do. Be an advocate for your child. Do not force your children to do something he is not ready for. Get all the energy you can, and trust that something wonderful will happen if you keep on working very hard. Some of these words I learned from my good friend, Dr. Maria Serrano, whom I highly recommend to all those moms and dads who, like us, have a special child. Love your children, devote time to them because at the end there will be a reward.

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