

From Threat to Acceptance

The Story of a Different Way of Being



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Introduction — A Picture Starting from the Kitchen

My life closely resembles the doughs I love to make every day.



In the beginning, everything is separate: flour, water, yeast, salt. Some heavy, some light, some calm, some explosive. If someone looks hastily, they will only see messiness,another will see a ritual, another anxiety and noise but some will look more closely, imagining with a bit of creativity a future creation.
Thus, when the right moment arrives, everything unites and takes shape. Then it takes time. Patience.
The dough needs to "rise," to grow, to find its space — before it becomes bread.

My life was somewhat like that. For many years, everyone only saw the separate "ingredients." But no one could understand what I was as a whole. It took time, difficulties, pain, exhaustion, research, searching, but ultimately the most important thing was simple - the correct diagnosis - to put everything into place.

As the ancient Greeks said: "It doesn't take effort, it takes a way."

And as our tgrandmothers said: "Good things take time!"

I will say: Good dough doesn't need stress and noise, it needs silence, love, and peace! 🧚



1. Touchdown in a World Full of Noise

For as long as I can remember, the world around me was overwhelmingly intense.



SOUNDS WERE LOUDER.

SMELLS HEAVIER.

TASTES UNPREDICTABLE.

LIGHT TIRING.

SLEEP DIFFICULT.

I often woke up at dawn — as if my mind never stopped functioning from the moment I simply began to exist.

From a very early age, there were signs of high cognitive development. I wrote words and my name from three years old. I did additions and subtractions before even reaching primary school. I learned fast, absorbed information, observed everything, and questioned EVERYTHING!

My whole daily life was so ACTIVE : ballet, football, athletics, ping pong, taekwondo, tennis, swimming, music, violin, guitar, piano, music theory, chess, rhythmic gymnastics, English, German, astronomy, robotics, programming, and always something that calmed me every Saturday and Sunday.

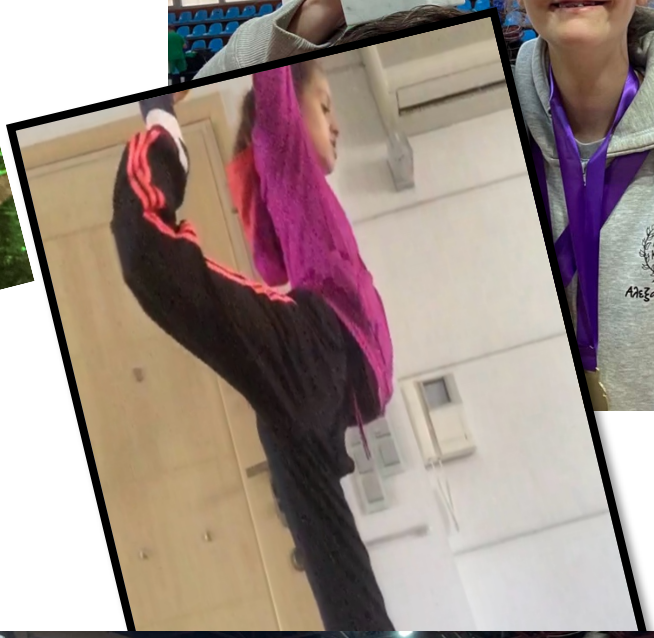
When I went to competitions and contests, I usually returned with a medal or trophy, awards, commendations, excellence certificates... just like that.

And yet... **behind all these achievements was a child struggling deeply, not with complex things...**

but with simple ones... perhaps with what others consider basic, necessary, or taken for granted...




Αλεξανδρούπολη




VOLLEYBALL TEAM

2. What Was Hidden Behind?

Socializing was not easy for me!

I didn't have friends the way others did. I usually hung out with boys or my brother's friends. There was deep **loneliness** — even though externally I appeared **"functional."**
At school, there was **bullying**, which I didn't speak about easily, because the family environment was also quite difficult and emotionally heavy
.**in this case silence was my choice!**

I lived constantly with anxiety: anxiety about changes, travel, gatherings, parties, non-acceptance, boring summers, hunger, daily routine — anxiety about almost everything!!!!
And this anxiety did not stay inside. It manifested physically. Fevers without infection. Diarrhea from stress. Throat pain, stomach pain, inability to swallow. My body spoke — before I could speak myself.



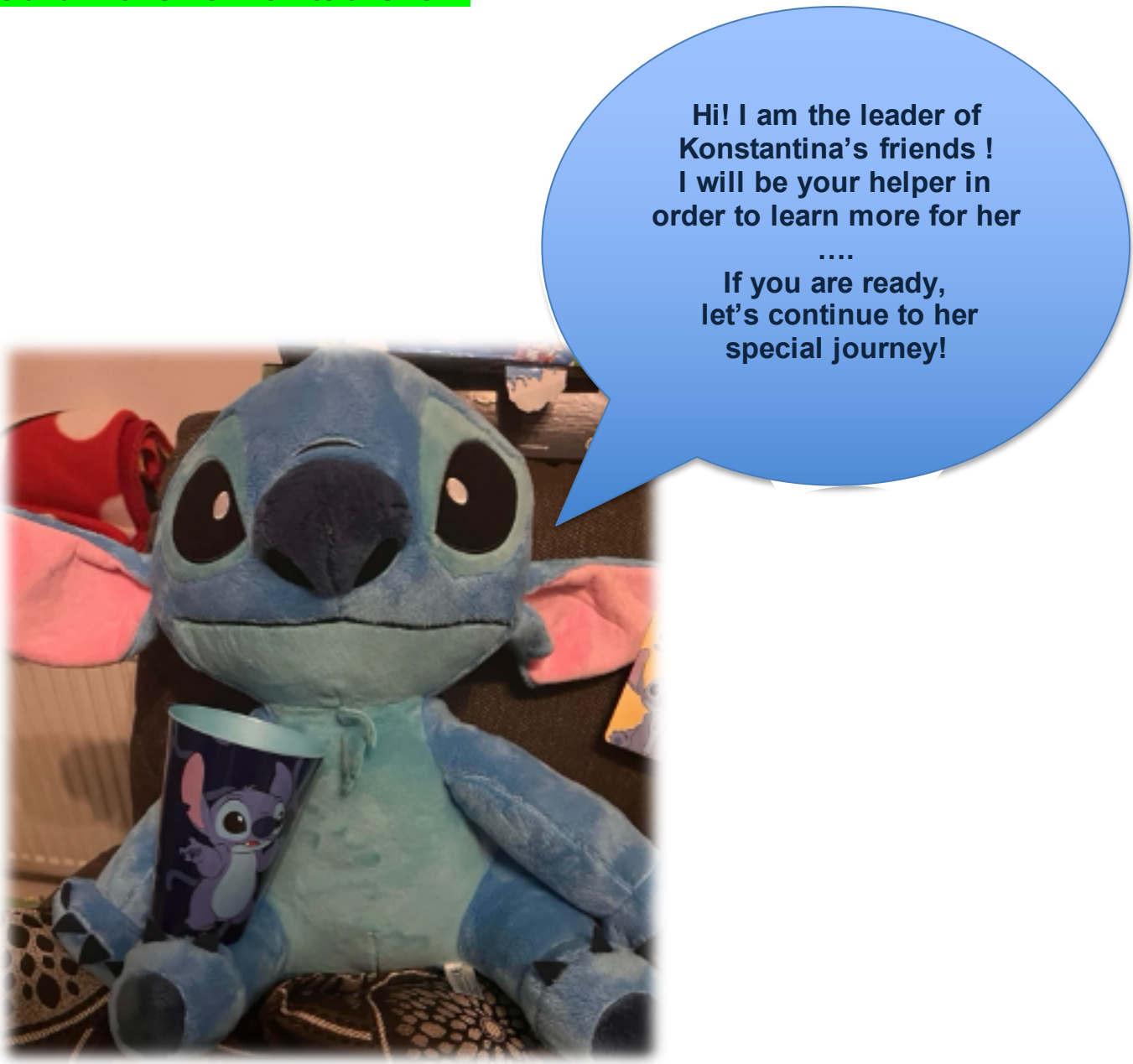


Yet I too! I was a human being in the social sense, so I went through a period where my **only** friends were my **childhood teddy bears.**

They were the only **"objects with faces and sweet eyes"** that simply listened without needing to answer...

I was young then, but even now as an adult, when faced with overwhelming difficulties, I hug them again for safety...

Of course, now I also have a soul mate named Snoopy, my dog, who has a voice and knows well how to answer...



3. Food as a Language of Survival

The greatest struggle turned out to be **sensory** processing, which naturally affected one of the most vital needs: food.

Food was never simple for me.

It was safety. Predictability. Sensation. Taste, smell, name, and appearance.

I had **specific** ways of eating, **specific** foods I could tolerate, but all were so important to me**.**

PACKAGED FOODS CALMED ME — BECAUSE I KNEW EXACTLY HOW THEY WOULD TASTE.

If something had a strong smell of egg, onion, or an **intense texture**, my body reacted immediately.

When I was little in kindergarten, a lady always sat beside me until I ate.

Not because I didn't want to, but because I couldn't do it easily.

I often ate along with songs, sounds, and emotions I selected (definitely not shouting or pressure

traveling to safe places — as if trying to regulate the world so I could exist in it.

MY NANNY WAS MY GREATEST SENSE OF SAFETY FOR YEARS.

When she left, eating, joy, and play stopped...



When I was a baby (1.5 years old), when a new nanny arrived, all I did was sleep, and she told my mother the child didn't want her. This happened twice — once around 1-2 years old, and again around age seven.

There were continuous changes: changing schools, moving houses, changing routines. Every change felt like my whole internal world collapsed... while for others, it was just something new.

SO, EXTERNALLY, EVERYTHING LOOKED "PERFECT."

A GOOD STUDENT. ACTIVE. TALENTED. SUCCESSFUL.

Was that the reality?

Or not?



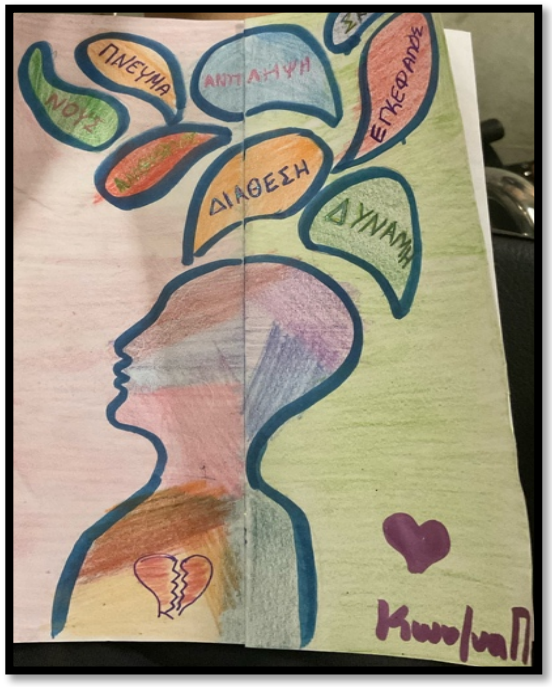
4. Misleading Labels

For years, people saw ONLY a girl who couldn't eat everything and she was so strange with many things and simultaneously was so thin and thick but she couldn't gain weight . Thus began a long cycle of misdiagnoses, with the greatest hardship in pre-adolescence (ages 13-14, with delayed hormonal development despite my height).

I heard the term "anorexia nervosa" repeatedly.

Hospitalizations, clinic visits, evaluations in Athens followed. But inside, I knew my struggle wasn't fear of my body. As a doctor at one clinic said, I was trying to

"**PROVE I WASN'T AN ELEPHANT!"**



I DID NOT FEEL "FAT."

I DID NOT WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT.

I WAS NOT PURSUING AN IMAGE.

I WAS TRYING TO PROVE THAT I DIDN'T JUST NEED TO EAT, BUT THAT I WANTED TO EAT!

LOSING WEIGHT BROUGHT ME DEEP SORROW.

GAINING WEIGHT BROUGHT ME JOY, NOT WORRY OR DISTRESS.

I simply couldn't navigate something I didn't understand about myself.

Borderline, Depression, Anxiety, Emotional disorders, phobias, eating disorders...

Everyone gave a different name to something no one truly saw in depth.

And I absorbed it all — not because I agreed, but because when you are a child and adults speak with certainty about who you are, you begin to doubt even yourself.

As I grew older, I didn't even know who I really was...

There was still nothing certain, safe, or predictable!



5. Without the Storm ⛈️⚡ …… The Rainbow Won't Appear! 🌈🍭

Yet if the crucifixion didn't happen... we wouldn't know resurrection!

Yet if the storm didn't come... then we wouldn't know what the rainbow is either!!!

Later came a very difficult period. A serious accident led me to intensive care. At home during that time, there was **noise, tension, difficulties, explosions, anger, and chaos —**



which probably led to a difficult struggle that followed after A GREAT MIRACLE!!!

Waking up from an induced coma in the ICU and being told you had an accident and fell from a 20-meter height shocks you but without knowing **HOW** it happened!!





Perhaps for me it wasn't so difficult to recover or walk on broken legs without a walker or swim in the sea or cook with two fully broken legs full of metal pins, but to believe WHO was near to you on that day.....



NEVERTHELESS, EVEN FROM THERE I EMERGED STRONGER, 💪 I MADE IT, AND I AM GRATEFUL EVEN FOR THIS EVENT!!!

And I was ready for the path toward the rainbow 🌈..... represented today by the infinity symbol ∞.

6. The Moment Has Arrived – The Dough Has Finally Risen!

Then came the moment of proper differential diagnosis.

Meeting my doctor at AHEPA Hospital in Thessaloniki was the first time I felt someone **looked 👀 not just at symptoms**, **but at ALL of me — every thought, difficulty, joy, and simplicity...**

AS IF IT WERE MY OWN MOTHER.....

After many evaluations and tests, through a somewhat **difficult and tiring but crucial hospitalization,I was diagnosed on the neurodivergence spectrum, specifically Autism and ADHD.**

AND THEN, SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING MADE SENSE!





- ✓ **Why my mind never stopped.**
- ✓ **Why my complaining was my favorite thing**
- ✓ **Why "I'm bored" was my favorite phrase.**
- ✓ **Why my daily life was constantly full of questions.**
- ✓ **Why I was ungrateful.**
- ✓ **Why I wasn't emotionally expressive.**
- ✓ **Why my senses were so intense.**
- ✓ **Why I got exhausted by things that seemed simple to others.**
- ✓ **And why I relaxed with things that for others are complex and impossible.**

I often use a comparison:

A neurotypical person can go from Alexandroupoli to Thessaloniki via Egnatia highway in a few hours.

A person on the neurodivergence spectrum might reach the same destination by passing through dozens of different routes, passing through every small village and exit. They will reach it. But the journey will have required multiple times more energy, thought, endurance, persistence, and patience.



This does not mean inability.

It means a different way of processing the world!

The diagnosis wasn't a simple sentence.

It was liberation,It was joy, it was a gift, for me it was relief, it was truth.....

It was the first time I stopped desperately searching

"what is wrong with me."

I WASN'T BROKEN. I WAS DIFFERENT!

7. The New Piece in the Puzzle: Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS)

While the diagnosis of autism and ADHD answered questions about how my mind and senses work, another piece demanded its truth: MY BODY.

For years, physical pain,

frequent injuries,

joint instability,

unexplained fatigue,

Fibromyalgia

and bodily sensitivities,

dysautonomia

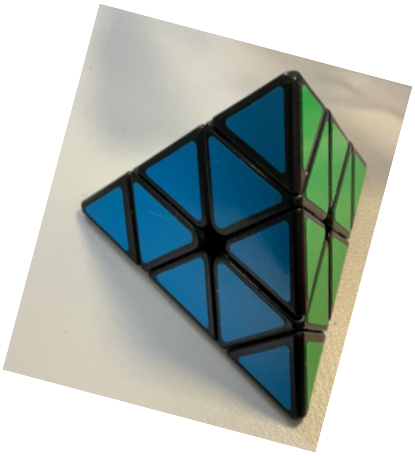
So many unanswered gastrointestinal issues,

Which NOW HAVE THE NAME :

Gastroparesis

SMA SYNDROME

NUTCRACKER SYNDROME



were treated as RANDOM OCCURRENCES or "PSYCHOSOMATIC" anxiety symptoms.

Thus came the diagnosis of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS). It is a connective tissue disorder explaining why my body reacts differently, why my joints and tissues are fragile, and why physical pain was a silent companion.

The link between neurodivergence (Autism/ADHD) and EDS is not coincidental

Accepting this diagnosis didn't discourage me!



IT IS PART OF MY MULTIFACETED NATURE!

Instead, it completed the UNENDING PUZZLE!
It taught me to respect my body, guard my boundaries, and realize that my physical fragility coexists with immense inner STRENGTH

















The Silent Journey of a Zebra

"When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses, not zebras," they say,
The words that doctors and people repeat every day.
Living in a world with joints that bend and twine,
With endless strength, patience, and a flexible spine,
Always accompanied by hope and a cheerful light,
Making no noise, keeping the struggle out of sight.
"You are so lucky," everyone around me will shout,
"A literal elastic person, there is no doubt!
I wish I could stretch and bend just like you do."
But what is hidden behind the praise they give to you?
Could everything be different than what they perceive?
Could it be a zebra, and not a horse, that they disbelieve?
Or does even that sound too wild to achieve?
How do you know if the horse was a zebra all along,
Or if the zebra was just a horse, but proven wrong?
From Europe you will sail to the North and South American shore,
But you will finally land on Africa's floor...
Where endless zebras roam free under the sun,
Beautiful, proud, and unique, every single one.
With similarities, yet thousands of differences to trace,
Each one distinct, finding its own special place.
So if hypermobility is what you hold inside,
Flexibility is a trait you certainly cannot hide.
You will learn to endure for the rest of your days,
Traveling the world, lost in a medical maze.
Knocking on doctors' doors, through the day and the night,
Until the hidden truth finally comes to light:
The flexibility they praised is the one to blame,
For all you have suffered, and all that has no name!





One of my poems which lead me to the first prize 🏆 of the worldwide competition With the name
“ZEBRAS (people with EDS)**GOT TALENT”**

And now here is a big challenging question🙃😇😉:

What is the the major reason for my all pathological-mental conditions🔬👨‍⚕️?

Are all of them ☣️🧬?

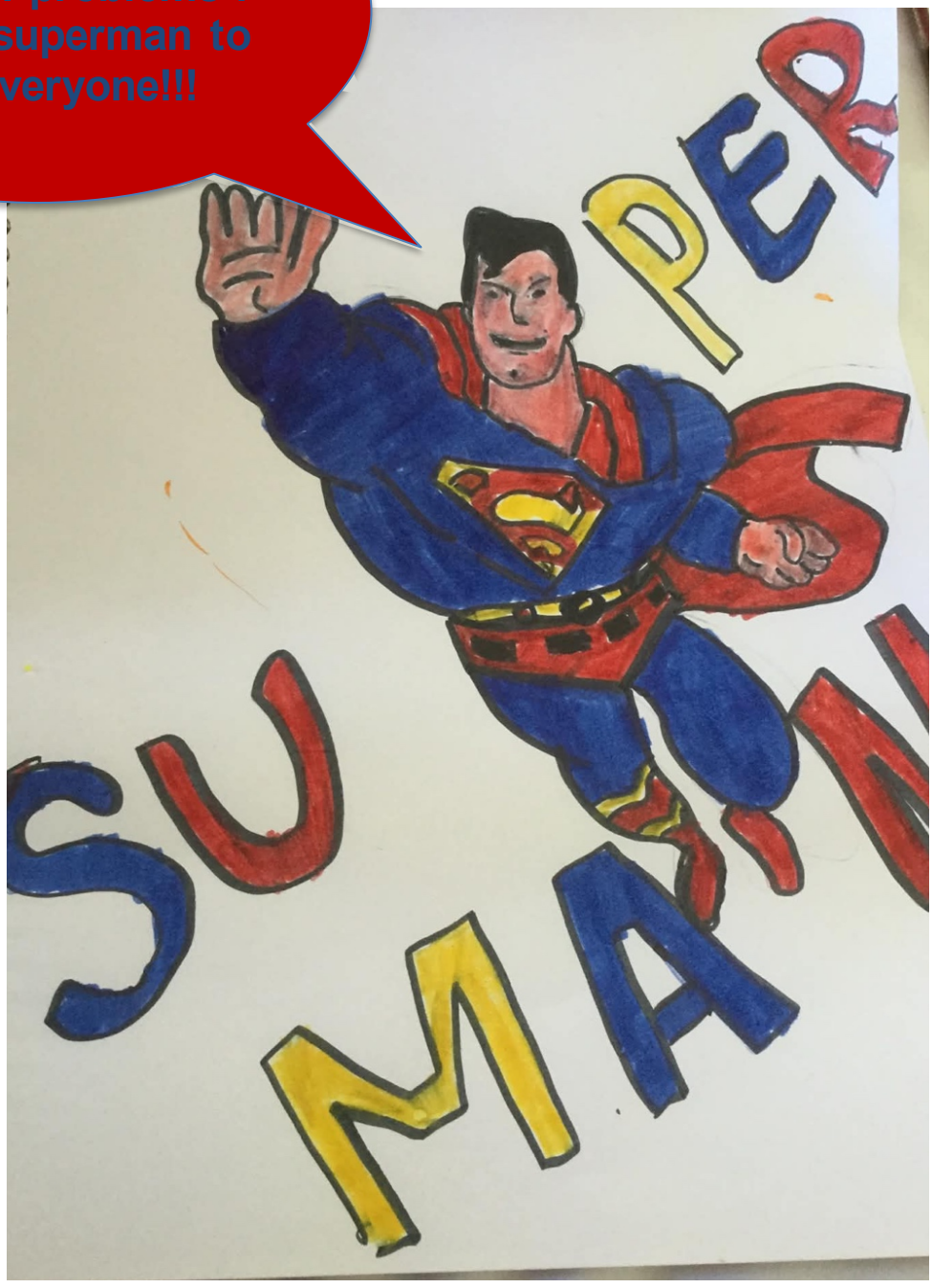
And which is the “King”👑🤩 ?

Is there any 😱?





I heard about a couple of problems . Here is superman to help everyone!!!

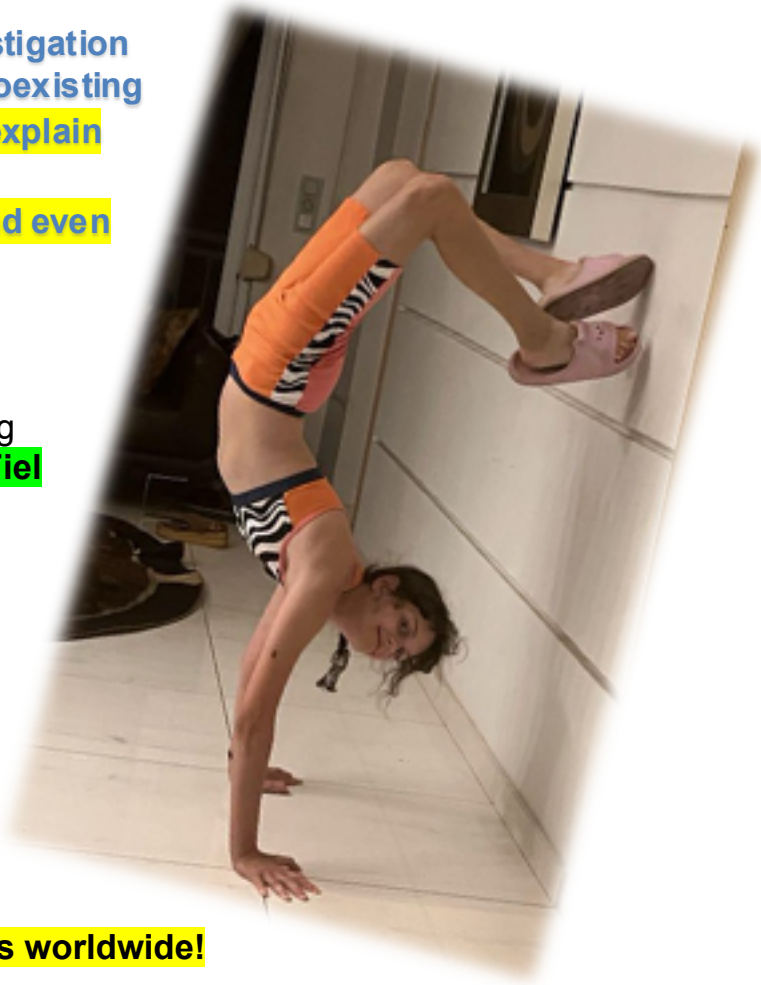


8. Today: The Life I Chose

Today I continue to fight, create, and evolve..

I love the phrase: "***THERE IS NO 'I CAN'T', ONLY 'I DON'T WANT TO'!"***
But always paired with: "**MODERATION IN ALL THINGS!"**

I am on a continuous journey of investigation regarding other medical conditions coexisting with autism, ADHD, and EDS, which explain even more and more better my whole symptoms and medical conditions and even THR MENTAL ONES
Yet, I live and move forward...



I also **participate in parasports** (due to disability in my leg and shoulder), playing **Badminton, Ping Pong, and Track & Fiel** (high jump and long jump). I actively participate in autism **advocacy**. I am an **active member of the European Parliament of Persons with Autism (EUCAP), this year I participated in ACTIVATE PROJECT . I am also a member of SEDS CONNECTIVE CHARITY organizing awareness programs, including two major conferences in London and Malta exclusively for autistic individuals, specialists, and medical professionals worldwide!**

I participate in a **local musical combining theater, music, and dance — three expressions I love deeply.**
In my free time, I play piano, violin, write poetry ✍️, and paint while cooking!
I completed studies in Pedagogy and am pursuing my Master's degree in "Bioethical Dilemmas in Medicine."

I also attend training programs in **psychopathology** and **artificial intelligence** programs because **technology and programming are also some of my**

favourite interests and finish my specialization in **Special Education** — aiming to help others experiencing difference as I did.

At this period I also write my **Master** with a lot interest because its title is **"Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (hEDS): Interactions Between the Diagnostic Pathway, Chronic Pain, Family and Social Environment, and Mental Health During the Transition to Adulthood — A Bioethical Approach"**
Simultaneously, I am studying for the university entrance exams for medical school.

MY DREAM IS TO FINISH MEDICAL SCHOOL AND SPECIALIZE IN THIS FIELD TO RELIEVE HUMAN SUFFERING!



Epilogue — The Bread That Finally Baked!

Through it all, there is always dough. For many, it's just cooking. For me, it's life itself.

At first, dough seems chaotic — different ingredients, textures, mess, overload.

But then comes the moment everything unites. Dough needs time to rise, needing calmness, stability, and guidance. My journey was similar.

The diagnosis didn't change who I was. It simply gave shape to what was already there!!!



Finishing with a different conclusion….

Autism is neither a deficit, nor a voice, nor a sacred rite,

It is not chaos, weakness, sorrow, or noise in the night.

It is not the end of a life,

but hope starting anew full of bright

A different way of perceiving, sensing, and seeing the truth alight!

Perhaps beside you stands a child, a friend, a relative — someone slightly different.

I hope through my story we learn not to add to their struggles,

but to become part of their safety, happiness, and acceptance.

Love yourself first, and love the person across from you as your own soul and heart!

Don't be afraid you need just to be real and faith!

Be thankful every day and your life will get free and great!!!



…a slightly (neuro)different farewell:

I send you my wishes with respect and with love,

May a brighter future bless your life from above.

May daily peace and calm keep your mind at ease,

May every hardship turn to comfort with grace and ease.

May your daily life be bathed in moments

bright,

With loved ones sharing joy and warm delight.

And whatever your heart dreams in quiet thought,

May it come to pass as peace and care are brought.

Just as dough in time becomes wholesome bread,

A human blooms when met with acceptance instead.

I hope I haven't tired you out,

,Only touched your heart without a doubt!

I WISHING YOU A WONDERFUL YEAR FULL OF PRACTICING,LEARNING,LAUGHING AND EVERY SINGLE DAY ENJOYING!



This is one of my cooking paintings for winter welcoming!