

# Psychological Effect of Attitude on the Dyslexic Child: A Critic of the film ' Like Stars on Earth. (Every Child is Special)

Substance C. Ahiauzu, <sup>1\*</sup> Onyinye A. Chiemezie <sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Portharcourt. Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Linguistics and Communication Studies University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

\*E-mail : subnelo@gmail.com

## Abstract

This work analyses the film 'Like Stars on Earth. (every child is special), an Aamir Khan production, discussing major characters and how their attitudes contribute to the marring/making of the life of the main character- Ishan Navasti (Darsheel Safary), a boy with dyslexia. The analysis shows that public disgrace, verbal abuse, rejection, mockery, impatience from parents, teachers and friends are just a few of the challenges a child with dyslexia faces aside the main struggle of difficulty in learning. This makes the child develop traits like extreme stubbornness and truancy as a survival shield, low self-esteem, frustration, fear and total lack of interest in learning. However, relationship of Ishan Navasti with the character Mr. Nicole (Aamir Khan), the temporary Art Teacher, whose consistent show of love, concern, care, encouragement, friendliness, acceptance, appraisals, extra elementary teachings using sensual and participatory methods amongst others built back the boy's self-esteem, confidence and attitude towards learning. Over time, Ishan got hold of his academic and endowed strengths, he became the school's icon. The researcher recommends this film for every teacher and parents of children with special needs.

**Keywords:** dyslexia, attitude and effect.

## 1. Introduction

LIKE STARS ON EARTH (every child is special) an Aamir Khan production addresses the challenges of a child who has difficulty in reading and writing. Reading and writing is the basic need for adequate learning in any formal school. This difficulty is known as dyslexia. It is imperative that every teacher, parent and the society come in terms with this reality so as to be prepared for a healthy response to any child with such challenge. This work focuses on attitude analysis, using the film to bring to speed the effect of negative attitude on the child and analyses recommendable positions that one can brace up with for an effective positive attitude.

### 1.1 Literature/Theoretical Underpinning

The definition of dyslexia seemingly most accepted internationally is the IDA definition. On August 3, 2002, the IDA (International Dyslexia Association) and NICHD (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, USA) convened a scientific consensus meeting to bring the research definition, used by NICHD since 1994, in line with recent research. However the British Psychological Society's Working Group on 'Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment' published their working definition.

#### 1.1.1 Definition of Dyslexia

*"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin.*

*It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.*

*These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the*

*provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”*

This definition was subsequently approved by the IDA board of directors and is currently in use by NICHD. As can be seen, the IDA definition is a combination of the discrepancy definition (‘...is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities’) and the hypothesis of phonological weaknesses (‘...result from a deficit in the phonological component of language’). Gunnel (2007).

Children and teenagers with Dyslexia not only struggle with the development of reading and spelling skills, but also often develop low academic self-confidence, especially as they begin to recognize their learning differences.

The British Psychological Society’s Working Group on ‘Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment’ published the following working definition:

‘Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty.’ (BPS, 1999).

This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. The authors believe that this definition provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching. [www.Lucid-Research.com](http://www.Lucid-Research.com)

### **1.1.2 The Psychology of the Child with Dyslexia**

Orton in Michael (2004) opines that, the majority of dyslexic preschoolers are happy and well adjusted. Their emotional problems begin to develop when early reading instruction does not match their learning style. Over the years, the frustration mounts as classmates surpass the dyslexic student in reading skills. Recent research funded by the National Institute of Health has identified many of the neurological and cognitive differences that contribute to dyslexia. The vast majority of these factors appear to be caused by genetics rather than poor parenting or childhood depression or anxiety.

The frustration of children with dyslexia often centers on their inability to meet expectations. Their parents and teachers see a child who is not learning to read and write. Time and again, dyslexics and their parents hear, “He is lazy, Stubborn and Dull. Not ready to learn”. Ironically, no one knows exactly how hard the dyslexic is trying. The pain of failing to meet other people’s expectations is surpassed only by dyslexics’ inability to achieve their goals. This is particularly true of those who develop perfectionistic expectations in order to deal with their anxiety. They grow up believing that it is “terrible” to make a mistake. However, their learning disability, almost by definition means that these children will make many “careless” or “stupid” mistakes. This is extremely frustrating to them, as it makes them feel chronically inadequate.

The dyslexic frequently has problems with social relationships. These can be traced to causes: Dyslexic children may be physically and socially immature in comparison to their peers. This can lead to a poor self-image and less peer acceptance. Dyslexics’ social immaturity may make them awkward in social situations.

Many dyslexics have difficulty reading social cues. They may be oblivious to the amount of personal distance necessary in social interactions or insensitive to other people’s body language. Dyslexia often affects oral language functioning. Affected persons may have trouble finding the right words, may stammer, or may pause before answering direct questions. This puts them at a disadvantage as they enter adolescence, when language becomes more central to their relationships with peers. Permit me to say that psychologically, the dyslexic children suffer more than one can ever think or imagine and as such need early intervention and multidisciplinary approach to bring him out of the world of aloneness.

### 1.1.3 Methodology

This film like 'LIKE STARS ON EARTH every child is special' was watched on a VLC Media File Dvdrip Xvid Size: 1.42G. Duration: 02:42:14. Produced and directed by Aamir Khan. Main Setting. New Era school(Panchgani), St. Xariers school(Mumbai).

The simple present tense is used in the analysis. Excerpts of the film are given; the third party tales are written in italics.

### 1.1.4 Attitude Presentation

#### 1. Ishan Navasti

Ishan Navasti is a 9 year old boy born into the family of Mr and Mrs Ishan Navasti. Has an elder brother who is very brilliant and good in table tennis. Ishan is not good with class or book work but has got a lot of interesting things he does.

1a. Interests: Aquarium (time: 41: 21) persuades his father to take him to the aquarium. Little objects, call it trash that he thinks might help some day to fix any of his constructions. Infact, he has a small tool bag he carries with him everywhere he goes even to school. The interest of a boy consumes him, that he forgets to get into the school bus on time just because he is fishing in the dusty swaging school gutter. Again he uses his water bottle as the aquatic reserve until he gets home and turns it into a bigger gar. And most especially, colours are his favourites and he loves to paint.

1b. Non Interests: book work and especially exams scare him. School is a night mare. He has this non-challant attitude towards his scripts probably because he will definitely be reprimanded because of his failures.

1c. what happens in his mind? The  $3 \times 9 = 3$  Analysis

Classmate: Ishan how was the test?

Ishan: *with a huge wide smile...* mind blowing

(time 37:51)

$3 \times 9 =$

The third planet (earth) in an orbit movement notices the 9<sup>th</sup> planet (pluto). there evolves a fight and finally earth, which happens to still be in existence crashed into pluto (a scraped planet) and survives while pluto explodes thus earth fighting with pluto , had earth as the winner! Therefore  $3 \times 9 = 3$

He uses the inputs of the class work to feed his mind and mixes them with the creative artistic imaginations and scientific preoccupations gathered from his interests, observations and acquired knowledge. Really he is far beyond where the teacher can reach him.

#### 2. Attitude Analysis of Teachers at the New Era school (Panchgani)

Teachers call test scores out loud in the class for all to hear. Out of the scores, Ishan Navasti's scores comes out to be the poorest with a wide margin between his and that of the least among the others. The teachers discovered this problem amongst themselves but never attempted a one on one contact with the boy to identify what was actually wrong. Instead they turned the frustration on him and looks for any opportunity to send him out of the class. This bought Ishan some name calling by the students

The hostile environment was very unfriendly and Ishan on a particular day sort out for freedom and fresh air by playing truancy way beyond the gates of the school. To back up this act he coarses his elder brother to write him a sick permit letter so that the teacher will not bother ask his where about.

The point here is that ordinarily Ishan would not think of such ill manner but the pressure one gives to a child struggling with self-confidence and learning may give birth to strong negative reactions.

Finally, the headmistress together with the teachers in the presence of the child discuss with his parents, the child's problems, brands him as a medical case and ejects him from the school.

### 3. Attitude analysis of Parents of Ishan Navasti

3a. Anger Management: Ishan's father is prone to name callings like bloody idiot, you are such a failure, he threatens the body of leaving and never coming back, of setting him off to a boarding school etc. for any misunderstanding with other kids, Ishan's father passes the blame on him. To him, Ishan is the problem. He is mischievous, stubborn, lazy and rebellious.

He had never had an afterthought of what could be the 'cause' for such failure, headiness and lack of interest in his studies especially when the boy in question is physically and socially healthy and copes with other life's issues of interest considerably well. He asked no deliberate question or conversation to find out cause.

3b. Expectations: The father expects perfection and excellency in his children amongst others. he gets angry and disappointed on any child's setback and freely expresses such feelings towards the child. He unfortunately does not make any attempt to get to know the reason for such setback. This is also evidenced in his reaction to his first boy's performance at the table tennis final competition.

Mr Navasti: com'on Jahan! Hit it. *Jahan misses. Shit ! he pulls his cap and throw's it on the floor. What! Stands up with a long disappointed face as Jahan walks up to him*

Jahan: I'm sorry

A boy who has gotten to the finals and came up as the 1<sup>st</sup> runner simply deserves at least a hug and a pat. The father also is scared or rather repulses the idea to be called the father of a challenged child. His concern isn't the fact that the child may be challenged all this while but that he could not possibly give birth to an intellectually challenged boy.

4. Home Teaching: Maya, Ishan's mother noticed this slow and difficult learning and instead of seeking information or help, she accuses Ishan of being forgetful due to lack of concentration, threatens Ishan of being laughed at in school. This awakens the attitude Ishan experiences at school and he responded aggressively.

Note that if the boy wasn't concentrating, he wouldn't have learnt in the first place for the mother to talk about forgetfulness. Concentration breeds learning while forgetfulness is measured with one's capacity to retain.

### 5. Parental Fears

Mrs. Navasti - why Ishan?

Mr. Nicole: there's no answer to that. It's a neurological disorder.....

Mr. Navasti – so what you are saying is that my son is not normal. He is mentally retarded.

Mr. Nicole: what a strange man you are. *Shows him Ishan's paintings.* He has a sharp mind that can speak of a thousand colourful dreams far more beyond you and I are capable of.

Mr. Navasti: what's he going to gain from it

Mr. Nicole: why are you looking for gain in this

Mr. Navasti: what else should I look for. What will he grow up to do. How is he going to compete in this world with everyone. Tell me, am I to look after him all my life?

It is very obvious that the macho-man strong hearted father is just a cover up for terrifying fears concerning the future of his child. He didn't just know how to react to it or go about the problem. Mr. Nicole took time to explain why every child must not be likened to the other or given some expectations to meet. He explains that every child is unique with his own dreams and desires. He idiomatically explains that pressurizing a child is like pulling the smaller fingers to be equal with the other until it finally breaks. Forcing dreams and expectations on children, he says, is worse than child labour.

6. Reactions : Ishan's parents discuss his problems, their frustrations, fears even their argument of going to a boarding school right before him and within his hearing. The father feels the sense of a responsible man as long as he provides basic needs like education, shelter and food and reacts angrily to anything less than the best. Compares Ishan with his brother who is far much better than him academically.

The mother feels exhausted having sacrificed her career and time to take care of the kids and home. Though is affectionately tied to the boy. She expresses these feelings to the boy's hearing.

The whole issue sums up to the boy as the problem, their problem. Not the challenge nor the circumstance but the boy himself. This directly attacks his self-esteem and self-confidence.

The threat and decision to dump the child in a boarding school was very devastating for the boy. The parents went further to arm the teachers with a negative report of extreme stubbornness exhibited by their child. A weapon that totally exposed the boy to aggressive criticism and undue negative recognition in every class.

Ishan's perspective to parental attitude is aggressiveness, fear of rejection, feelings of loneliness. His being taken to boarding school, he saw as a punishment to his inability to improve in his academics. (time:59 – 1.00.00). This led to his flip-book paint of the gradual separation, detachment from and final loss of his family.

#### 7a. Attitude Analysis of Teachers at the St. Xavier's School(Mumbai)

7b. Literature Teacher: Ishan Navasti, a new student who had barely acclimatized with the school and classmates, was given the first class assignment to analyse a poem on his first day at school after a brief public reminder by the teacher that he has been reported to be a very distracted and dull person.

Education/psychology principles naturally advise that a child battling with a new environment should be given room and healthy relationship to adapt, familiarize and blend with the environment and with the teaching methods.

Ishan surprisingly gave a reasonably brave tackle to the question but was pulled down immediately by the teacher's harsh response.

The conversation that ensued between Ishan and his seat mate Rajan, reveals the fact that the teachers has already trained the pupils on giving certain generally or text oriented answers rather than being creative, original and thinking outside the box.

According to Anatole France, 'the whole art of teaching is only in the awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.'. therefore, training the pupils just to gurgle down someone's taught or ideas without allowing them to generate there is already an error.

7c. The English Teacher: Here the teacher shows off his flair and mastery of the subject in his rapid definitions of the topic rather than being dedicated to getting the knowledge across the boy. This show off intimidated the boy Ishan and left aloof, confused and bewildered and because he has not learnt the basic identification of letters, the whole concept muddled up with image marring of letters. letter 'b' becomes 'd', 'a' is written as 'd', 'c' written as 'o', 'e' is written as 'o'.

#### 7d. The House Master:

Ishan: *walking in slowly*

H.M: (sternly)where have you been? Mhmm where were you roaming? Your mother had just called. go ,stand by the phone, she said she will call again. Go....!

Ishan: *walks towards the phone with hanging shoulders. And never spoke a word to his family at the other end but had tears.*

1. No response to the mother's/brother's phone call, leaves the phones open and walks away in tears. (Time:1.21.11-1.22.28)

2. His art work of separation from the family

3. Always aloof seeking to be alone e.g. climbing the top most floor, getting to the rails and looking down

4. Going to the river bank in the even tide just gazing beyond.

5. Extreme frustration/Anger/Rejection expressed through running round the courtyard away from his family

6. No show of enthusiasm to go stay with the family in the hostel room

7. No show of happiness when given a set of drawing and painting kit

8. No emotions when the family was leaving after their visit. Ishan has lost hope in life itself.

9. TEACHERS voices in his mind: male voice 1 – *this child can drive anybody crazy, female voice: someone please call up his dad, male voice 2: if you've a problem, call up his dad.*

#### 4.5.1 The Peak of Rejection

The constant abuse and torment from teachers as lazy, crazy, idiot; the laughing stock he has been in class ; the negative jeerings worsened Ishan's frustration and nightmares. He got to the point where he dreaded learning. This is evidenced in his viewing letters as

- Poisonous spiders coming towards him
- Venomous viper aiming to bite him'

This pushed him to discard his books, break pencils and rulers etc. (time: 1.05.40)

The resultant effect is likened to the solemn Island where the tribals gather and haul abuses on any tree that stands on their way while making a field. They don't cut it down they just curse it. After some days, slowly but surely, the tree begins to wither. It dies on its own. Ishan simply died, just like any cursed tree on the Solemn Island

### 5.0 Recommended Attitude: The turning point

However, he showed care and affection to Rajan—the only friendly classmate who truly appreciates his abilities. And then Mr. Holcal (Art Teacher) was transferred. And Mr Nicole, who happens to work in the school for challenged children and has the heart of a true teacher, was employed as a temporary art teacher for the school. (time: 1.11.11)

Step 1 : First Impression – be friendly

Capturing the children's attention through kiddies' world music and dancing, Mr Nicole bridged that relationship gap between teachers and students. He created a friendly atmosphere for learning.

He makes teaching fun. Amidst the dancing and music, he was teaching lines and curves which are the basics of Art (time:11.14.26).

He broke the static give-back mechanism of the former teacher and opened the unlimited imaginations of the children.

Boy: what do we draw Sir? There is nothing on the table.

Mr Nicole: this table? *laughs* This table is too small to contain the wonderful world of imagination. Look into the window of your mind and search out a beautiful picture, pull it out and slap it on the paper. Go on have fun, no one is going to stop you again.

It is amazing what these children could do. See pictures

Mr Nicole's first impression however isn't enough to draw Ishan out of his hole. This can be used to measure the extent of damage done. Even in a favourable environment with a friendly teacher and his painting hobby, Ishan has lost it all. He simply wouldn't bulge.

Step 2: Negative Influence Proof

Other teachers adopt a crucifying attitude towards the pupils mistakes. In the staff room they discuss the children in a hopeless manner and projects a poisonous attitude towards any teacher who thinks otherwise. Mr. Nicole did his best to avoid this in the most respectable way.

**Mr.Nicole:** *tries to keep the children's classwork in the locker*

**Maths Teacher:** excuse me, why are you keeping them in there?

**Mr.Nicole:** it's the children's classwork

**Maths Teacher:** and so what? Mr.Holcal never kept them there.

**Mr. Nicole:** so where do I keep them.

**Maths Teacher:** just give it back to them. It's of no use anyway.

**Eng.Teacher:** what a racket you make in class Nico, it's like a fish market in there.

**Mr.Nicole:**they are just kids Sir. What do you expect? And if kids can't express themselves in an art class, where else would they.

**Eng. Teacher:** that's ok but just go easy. The headmaster wants discipline in the school, discipline.

### Step 3: First Contact with Ishan: Problem Control

The teacher noticed his absentmindedness when others were painting and his paper was blank.

Mr Nicole: filled with concern, whistles to the boy. Ishan looks up wats up man? *Smiles*. Looking for inspiration? No problem. Pats the boy on the head. Its normal

*Goes on checking round then he comes to Ishan's table to meet the blank paper again*

Here, Mr Nicole commonises the problem. '...its normal' , gives room for improvement. He tries to ease tension (using the pats and smiles). However, he goes round and meets Ishan's paper blank again.

**Mr Nicole:** *more concerned* . boy, what's the matter? Painting doesn't interest you?

**Ishan:** *gives no response, keeps his head bowed*

**Mr Nicole:** what's your name son? *Silence still*

**Rajan:** *intervenes*. Sir his name is Ishan Navasti

**Teacher:** thanks. *he walks away*

He did nothing? One may ask. He doesn't know the problem so he treads with caution and draws nobody's attention and keeps it within the teacher-boy circle. This is different from the black listing he is getting from every other teacher.

### Step 4: Second Contact with Ishan- Personality Sensitive and Problem Identification

The new art teacher sees Ishan again serving punishment outside the classroom while a class is going on. He tries to ask questions but notices that the boy is avoiding him in a fidgety manner. He retreats and apologises for intruding. He knew the boy is not familiar with him so he is prepared to wait. Meanwhile he sorts information from another positive end...Ishan's friend Rajan. Rajan gives him a clue to Ishan's predicament. The teacher searches through Ishan's books and discovered the nature of his problem.

### Step 5: The Extra Mile Teacher

Mr. Nicole sort information from Rajan Modranda, Ishan's friend, who gave him a clue to Ishan's predicament, he searched through his books and found the extent of the problem. He traces Ishan to his home and family.

This one step opened him up to Ishan's world and intelligence, potentials, abilities, creativity and also unfortunately his disorientation and loss of connection to his family. He uses the opportunity to educate the Navastis about Ishan's case.

**Mr.Nicole:** why did you send him away?

**Mr. Navasti:** we had no other option. Last year he failed in Grade III. Can you believe that? Grade III and no sign of any improvement. My other son stands first in every subject, in every class but that fellow ...

**Mr.Nicole :** what do you think his problem could be?

**Mr. Navasti :** problem? His attitude! What else? Towards his studies, towards everything in life, he's mischievous, disobedient, rebellious, doesn't listen to what we say.

**Mr.Nicole :** *shakes his head in disappointment*. I'm asking you what he's problem is but you are telling me his symptoms.....like a fever.....but the fever must have a cause. What is the cause?

**Mr. Navasti:** *gestures in a confused manner*. Alright then, you tell us, tell us.

**Mr. Nicole:** in the mistakes that he makes, have you notice any pattern or a repeat in the mistakes that he makes?

**Mr. Navasti:** pattern, what pattern? It is nothing but mistakes.

**Mr Nicole:** then you haven't recognized the pattern. Take a look. *He shows them common mistakes Ishan makes in his books... mix up of letters b,d,p.....mix up of similar spellings pot,dot.....inverts letters я,ə,a,ɔ,J.....different wrong spellings of a particular word on the same page... . why is he doing this? Is he dumb, lazy ? no ! in my opnion, he is having trouble recognizing alphabets.....*

**Mr. Navasti:** *in false bravery*. This is a lot of rubbish, excuses to avoid studying.

To drive home his point, Mr. Nicole picks up an electronic carton with Chinese inscription and asks Mr. Navasti to help him read it

**Mr. Navasti:** I can't, it is written in Chinese

**Mr. Nicole:** come on, give it a try, concentrate

**Mr. Navasti:** what nonsense! How can you expect me to....

**Mr Nicole:** *interrupts.* Look you are misbehaving now, your attitude is wrong. *Mr. Navasti attempts to explain but he cuts in.* you are being naughty.

Then it sank in, from the look of realization on Naratis

**Mr.Nicole** - this is what Ishan must be going through, he can't just recognize alphabets. This difficulty in reading and writing is called dyslexia. along with dyslexia, a child can have other problems as well for instance, difficulty in understanding multiple questions, turn to page 65 paragraph 4 line 2, confused.....tell me does he have problem buttoning or tying shoe lases?

**Mrs. Navasti:** *nods.* Yes

**Mr. Nicole:** yohan tell me, if you throw ball at him, can he catch it

**Yohan:** no. he can't just touch the ball

**Mr. Nicole:** that's because size, distance and speed, these three cannot correlate. How big is the ball, how far it is, how fast is it approaching? By the time he figures this out, he's missed the ball.

**Mr.Nicole** - just imagine, a child barely 8 or 9 years old can't read, can't write, can't do normal everyday activities, can't do a lot of things, other kids of his age mate can do effortlessly, what must he be doing. His self-confidence must be completely shattered. Obviously he is covering up his inadequacies by being disobedient.... Why should I admit to the world that I can't? just say I don't want to. that is what they learn from grown-ups. His spirit is crashing too into there. I am sorry to say but he has stopped painting completely. It is really sad.

#### Step 6: Confidence Building, A Gradual Process

##### 1<sup>st</sup> Stage – Awakening Curiosity

The next art class Mr. Nicole introduces child reorientation in his teaching presentation. First to awaken curiosity by flipping Ishan's book painting on his detachment from his family before him, just before his teaching. And then he gave his introduction to the day's topic in a story form.

##### 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage – Group Identification. NAS- Not Alone Syndrome

Mr. Nicole: the story of a boy who couldn't read or write.....no matter how hard he tried.....alphabet were his enemies .....it will dance before his eyes,moving,giving him a very hard time. *the whole class laughs.* Who could he share his problem with, his brain was crammed.....all these ABC disco. *The class laughs and Ishan tensed.....*One day, the poor boy failed, the pressure of study defeated him. People called him a loser and a fool but he put up a brave front..... then one day, the boy struck gold, then the world heard his theory and they were all bold. Tell me, can you guess his name?

This was the ice breaker. There was silence in class. Ishan's life story must be what the teacher is talking about. Another level of mockery, Ishan must have thought. He bows his head, shifts his gaze from left to right. Perhaps the teacher wants to talk about his mess. He must have been to his house and gotten a whole lot of bad news from his parents. Or maybe, a pupil will mention his name. Whatever it is, he is certain that it is him. No one else is like this. Then he heard Rajan's voice

**Rajan:** Albert Eistein. Ishan's eyes widened...not me? He sits up a little bit. At least he is not alone!

##### 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage: Ease Tension Technique

**Mr. Nicole:** correct Rajan, Albert Eistein, genius, great scientist, the man who shook the world with his theory of relativity...photo-electric effect for which he won the nobel prize in 1922.

*Mr. Nicole has been observing this boy and seeing how tensed and bewildered he is, calls out on him. But not to answer question*

**Mr. Nicole:** Ishan. *He looks up in surprise.* Please switch on the light. *Ishan obliges*

**Mr. Nicole:** *asks the class.* Tell me which famous inventor lit up the world by inventing electricity

**Ishan:** Edison. Thomas.... Edison

**Mr. Nicole:** good you are correct Ishan..... come sit Ishan. May Edison's light shine on us. *Warmly ruffles Ishan's hair.*

Ishan brighten's up, sits and smiles with Rajan. He is comfortable with this teacher.

**Mr.Nicole:** pulls another picture. What is this?

**Pupil:** helicopter



**Mr. Nicole:** ..... working sketch of helicopter by Leonard Vinci... the great Artist Inventor in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 400 years before the first airplane flew. This man had problems with reading and writing too. *He went on to mention other great people with similar problems in their childhood...Walt Disney, Abhishek Bachchan- famous musician, Agathy Christy- famous writer*

**Pupils:** *applauds in admiration*

These first three stages (child oriented) immediately brought life, hope, enthusiasm back to Ishan

4<sup>th</sup> Stage: Class Reorientation and Passion Initiation

**Mr.Nicole:** but why suddenly am I sharing this with you? To show that there had been such gems amongst us who changed the course of the world because they could look at the world differently. Their thinking was out of the box and not everyone understood them. They were ridiculed but inspite of that, they persevere. They were such winners that the world applauded them. so to these famous misfits, we dedicate today's art (class laughs healthily) with them in mind, let's step outside these four walls and create something different. Use whatever you can find, sticks, stones, rubbish.....anything. *class excited com'* on let's tend towards the pond by the valley.

The stories of great misfits have successfully sent the message across to the kids that failure in class is not necessarily failure in life. This will also help them in relating with Ishan in a more positive way.

5<sup>th</sup> Stage: Personal Testimony

The teacher goes on to relate his challenges as a child to Ishan. Yes, he achieves some confidence building with the stories but for trust, acceptance and understanding, a necessary ingredient for the challenged child-teacher relationship, he needs to share his experiences.

**Mr. Nicole:** Ishan hold on.....i too had a problem reading and writing when I was a kid. My father could never understand me. He thought I was making excuses for studying or just being naughty. He thought in life I will be a failure...whatever I am, I am right in front of you. *Waits for a moment. Shall we go?*

**Ishan:** did you go to my house?

**Mr.Nicole:** smiles, hugs him and both walks out.

A relationship starts. One that the child is not scared, does not feel helpless or misery but accepted, confident that he too can make it. This single class experience initiated by a passionate teacher resurrects the creative Ishan. At the river bank he creates an object like helicopter that floats, from the various things in his tool bag.

**Mr. Nicole:** look at this. *points at the floating object.* The applause was not what he was used to, so he just walked behind when the pupils were applauding and asking 'who made this'

Ishan's visit later on shows that his interest to aquarium life is back

6<sup>th</sup> Stage: School Reorientation

Mr. Nicole didn't stop at this huge achievement . he goes to the headmaster's office , educates him on Ishan's case and persuades him to over look Ishan's reading and writing and have him tested orally while he works on his deficiencies. He coaches Ishan using his familiar world – play, art work, sand filling letter writing, jumping maths etc.

Mr Nicole called for a painting competition. One that enhanced the teacher-pupil relationship of the whole school. On the day of the competition, Ishan woke up so early and got to the river bank to fill in a clear image of the river bank with a determined mind to be the best because someone has shown him it is actually possible.

And yes, Ishan's painting is the best- the river view. The public announcement of the result keeps Ishan hiding. he can't stand this huge applause but with the encouragement of Mr. Nicole, he comes forward. The big emotion filled hug he gave Mr.Nicole shows he owe him every thanks.

## 6.0 Conclusion: The New Ishan

The emerged Ishan increases in his interest to study, he reads notice board and is enthusiastic in his after school lessons. nightmares are replaced with the voice of Mr. Nicole telling stories about some great men who had challenges but overcame them. He became more coordinated and confident. He plays with others just like every other pupil. Everyone sings his praise. Teachers are proud of him, his parents adore him fellow pupils admire him and Mr. Nicole inspires him.

A dumb now so bright

A failure now a hero

Hated and abused now celebrated by all

He has also improved in maths, grammar, science etc

Mr. Nicole's attitude made the difference. A teacher no pupil will ever forget. Ishan's teacher, helper, inspirer, encourager, mentor. Ishan's hope d gift.

## References:

*Aamir khan production- The Film " LIKE STARS ON EARTH".*

*Gunnel (2007), Growing up with Dyslexia, Cognitive and psychological impact and salutogenic Hind University Sweden*

*-Fact sheet (19) - Understanding Dyslexia, Introductory notes. factors –department of psychology,*

*htt://www.lucid-research.com*

*British Psychological Society- Dyslexia, Literacy and Psychological Assessment..*