

Tourette's Strengths: Rediscovering the Unique Potential in Every Child

"It's not Tourette's that defines our children. It is their uniqueness that propels them beyond any diagnosis."

This article emerges from a recent meeting of the **Acovastta Mutual Aid Group (GAM)**. These groups offer a safe and confidential space where parents and individuals with **Tourette Syndrome** share experiences, strategies, and emotions. **Acovastta's GAMs** are a cornerstone of horizontal support, where no one imposes fixed solutions, and every voice is heard and validated. A place where the goal is not to "normalize," but to understand, connect, and grow together.

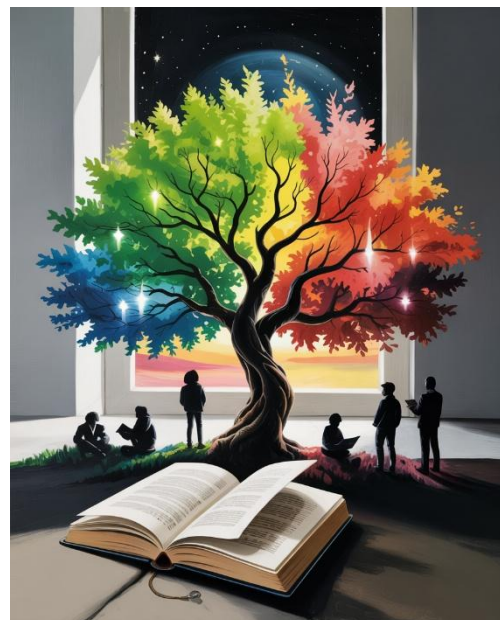
Tourette's Strengths: Beyond the Symptoms

During this meeting, a key question surfaced:

How can we discover the strengths of Tourette in each child and turn them into a driving force for their personal and vocational development?

One mother shared her doubts about certain characteristics of her son, such as his intensity and constant need for attention. Within the group, we proposed a change of perspective: *What if we see that intensity as charisma? That need as potential leadership?*

Our support should focus on nurturing each child's curiosity, passion, and individual strengths. Tourette is not a straight line, but a map waiting to be discovered.



Rediscovering Unique Capabilities

The group shared rich and nuanced examples. One 8-year-old boy, described as sociable, persistent, and emotionally intuitive, was recognized for his **relational and communicative**

abilities. Traits like emotional sensitivity or perfectionism, often a source of concern for families, were reframed as **essential skills for building meaningful futures** in areas like teaching, healthcare, or the arts.

Sport: An Ally of Emotional Well-Being

Physical well-being also took center stage. One mother shared how her teenage daughter, after starting to go to the gym, experienced significant improvements in her **self-esteem and emotional regulation**. Exercise is not merely a way to release energy; it's a **tool for reconnecting with the body**, a path to feeling capable and strong.

Tourette's Strengths: From Perseverance to Sensitivity

A powerful challenge emerged in the GAM: **to see Tourette traits as hidden strengths**. Perseverance, sensory sensitivity, hyperfocus... these traits, when channeled effectively, can become **differentiating qualities**.

One mother shared how her son reacts intensely to the tone of voice others use. What might initially seem like an emotional regulation issue was reframed as a **heightened capacity for emotional observation**. This skill, when supported, can be invaluable in professions like psychology, teaching, or any field where **empathy and human connection** are essential.

Big Dreams and Vocations on the Way

The group also shared the story of a boy passionate about **electronics and programming**, with a clear dream: to one day work for a major tech company. Although he faces challenges in everyday tasks, like tying his shoelaces, his **relentless curiosity** and **determination** fuel his self-taught learning journey.

This led us to pause and reflect:

What if, instead of focusing on limitations, we focused on what ignites our children's passion? How would their path shift if we allowed them to explore what excites them, free from fear of failure?

So often, without realizing it, we concentrate on what's missing, on what should improve. But this boy, who faces daily tasks that others find simple, demonstrates a unique capacity to imagine, build, and dream big.

What if true success lies in supporting those big dreams, no matter how unconventional they seem?

What if education means allowing each child to explore their interests, even when they stray from traditional paths?

A Message for Families: Changing the Way You Look

Now, I invite you to pause for a moment and ask yourself:

How do I see my child?

Do I focus on what's missing, or on what excites them?

Am I more concerned with correcting what "isn't working," or with walking alongside their unique process, just as it is?

This is an invitation **to challenge our own lenses**. Sometimes, unknowingly, we view our children through the lens of deficits, comparisons, or imposed expectations. But Tourette Syndrome and neurodivergence in general are not mistakes to be corrected. They are **different paths, full of unique possibilities**.

What if my child's perseverance isn't stubbornness, but willpower?

What if their extreme sensitivity isn't weakness, but a deep ability to connect with others?

When we change the way we see, we change the way we support. And in that shift, we open the door to discovering talents, passions, and pathways we never imagined.

Challenge the labels. Embrace Tourette strengths. That's where the real journey begins

Author: [Roxana Apollonio Cabrera](#) – Neuropsychologist and psychotherapist. specialized in Tourette's syndrome – Collaborator of Acovastta. Vice President of [TTAG](#)

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References:

- (1) TTAG Webinar with Dr. Erica Greenberg: "Tourette in Real Life: The Pendulum Swings." (2024) [Link](#)
- (2) Scahill, L., et al. (2022). *Tourette's syndrome: Reframing symptoms as strengths*. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dmcn.15123>
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