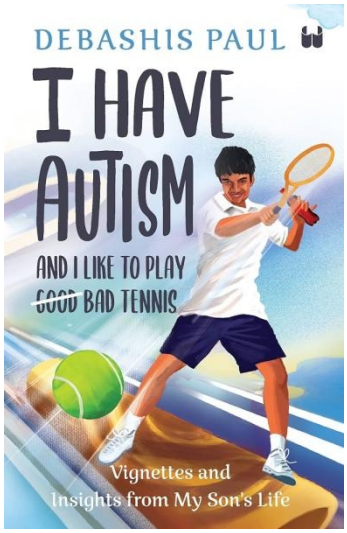
ILN JOURNAL:
INDIAN LITERARY NARRATIVES

https://doi.org/10.70396/ilnjournal.v3n3.b.02 | Volume 3, Number 3, September 2026 | ISSN: 3048 6920

Review of Debashis Paul's *I have Autism, and I play ~~Good~~ Bad Tennis:* A Memoir of Noel's Dad for Noelism

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Publisher: Westland Books
Original Language: English
Date of Publication: April 2023
Print Length : 240 Pages
ISBN: 978-9357762816
Price: ₹274
Link: https://amzn.in/d/0hciavRn

Submitted: 25.08.2026 Accepted: 26.09.2026 Published 30.09.2026

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Keywords: Debashis Paul, Noelism

The idea of budgeting for a child's future comes as a commitment for parents, overtaking the love and joy expressed and enjoyed in recent years. The demanding, structured education system aims to qualify the child to be an independent individual. These stories often attract attention and compliments. In his books, I Have Autism, and I Play Bad Tennis, Debashis Paul has moved beyond normal, standardised parenting and created a memorable path that uniquely skilled individuals can follow. In the Bible, Matthew 22:14 states, "*For many are called, but few are chosen".* The call is for Debashis Paul, and the chosen father is exemplified by it through his unconditional love, binding his son, Noel, in his ever-appreciative, enlightening thought. Noel was born on 15th December 1994. I am writing a book review as I found a new -ism named Noelism. Noel is taking his eternal rest in HIS light. Debashis Paul has taken responsibility for being Noel's father on an enduring journey in his son's love.

Noelism signifies courage and a high-spirited, thoughtful approach to life. Each setback in life is a stepping stone; with each step forward, a bloom of new hope. Noelism is defined as being a love warrior; the love symbolises Noel, while the warrior symbolises Noel's Dad. Acceptance, presence of mind, calm composure, and quiet surrender of Noel's dad gave Noel worldly endurance. These aforementioned traits strengthen the warrior's mind and define the spirit of Noelism.

Noelism fulfils the purpose of life in a meaningful manner. Through Debashis Paul, Noelism is enriched by the father's unregretful love. It revolves around acceptance, preparedness for the future, a well-mannered presence of mind, calm composure of the senses, and subtle quietness in surrender. Debashis Paul, more than a father, became the best companion Noel could ever ask for. Debashis Paul was determined to strengthen Noel in every aspect of life. It began from the moment Noel was identified as an autistic child. Noel was diagnosed with classical autism with Asperger syndrome traits. He had a neurodevelopmental disorder, and it was a lifelong condition. (Sreedaran and Ashok 155-160) In fact, Noelism impacts the strength of their dependents. Noelism teaches lessons that all humans carry as long as we live on this beautiful Earth. On a literal scale, Noelism resonates as a love warrior. Debashis Paul's love was an innate reflection which focused primarily on inclusion.

The book's title itself shows Debashis Paul's confidence and courage in showcasing Noel's life. It is a mutually correlated bond of expression. The book presents various ways Noel expressed his love and joy. Noel evidently lived his life without guilt and regret. His heart was open, and he welcomed warmth in every gesture. This forms the core essence of Noelism. It began with sporting events, then moved to baking, and even to attending public commercial events. Self-seclusion was never given space; instead, inclusion in all forms of approach was endorsed with love and joy.

The appreciative phase of parenting began when Debashis Paul and Pia never

considered abandoning the child; instead, they focused on making extensive efforts to build an integrated personality for Noel. Debashis Paul chose to build Noel's personality from scratch; at the same time, these integrating skills had to fit a normal child's life. Debashis Paul took a calm, composed approach to building Noel's integrated personality. Travelling, meeting people, visiting new places, and gaining experience in new, unexplored fields excited Noel as much as music does for his senses. Music is considered to be the queen of all senses. (Heaton) Listening to music was a habitual practice of Noel that kept him focused on his senses and eased his mind. Through Debashis Paul's lens, Noel was an enthusiastic young lad who lived for love and joy. Penning down each day's events is part of Debashis Paul's journaling. Every mark of an event with Noel is an art, and it was diligently journaled. In fact, the book became a memoir through Debashis Paul's everyday notes. This led readers to discover Noelism.

Noel was gifted with strong verbal abilities. This formed the basis for further experiences and activities in Noel's life. The progress was witnessed in the way that Debashis Paul worked and experienced alongside Noel, and not for Noel and not on Noel. Noel's verbal strength made commands easier to obey and practise. Often, people are dismayed by the restlessness and tantrums of autistic children. However, for Debashis Paul, these aspects were stepping stones to scale Noel's skills. Noel was taught to write his name with a gripper placed around the pencil or pen. Debashis Paul was the warrior who never failed to expose Noel to new learning and new fields. The verbal capabilities assisted in learning the basics of the computer keyboard. Debashis Paul was irresistible in his exciting adventure to strengthen.

Noel's dad, standing as a warrior, held unwavering, deep-rooted faith in Noel. The home teaching strategy built Noel's verbal capability in three languages; English was the most used, while Hindi and Bengali were used to some extent. Noel learned, remembered, and recalled the words. Noel made good progress, shown by his thoughtful questions, such as asking if there is a room inside a mushroom, as the word mushroom is a homophone of living room, bedroom, and washroom. He used a cause-and-effect strategy to respond. Noel was familiar with *Cheel*, which means a big dark bird, as taught by the Bengali housemaid. To Noel, the restaurant The Big Chill meant the Big Cheel.

Debashis, a warrior in his own right, exposed Noel to day-to-day life in varied ways. Debashis Paul maintained the same volume and tone when reminding Noel to acknowledge his difference. As Noel's Dad, Debashis Paul designed a structured routine for Noel. This felt confident and empathetic, buckled up for Noel. There were events of clutched guilt, which were shed away through presence of mind. The flight to Rome was one such incident where Noel faced the fall of routine structure. This made Noel understand that life is a random affair where good luck and bad luck play a major role.

Debashis Paul's love went beyond a parent's commitment. It articulated

dexterously to express Noel's liveliness in all possible ways. Each of Noel's acts counted toward his integrated self, from chopping vegetables to setting the table and filling the jug. Joining Noel in a bakery was one such expression. Noel became an employee in a bakery. He experienced a work culture with adult co-workers who coordinated with him at work. Debashis Paul had certain situations where there was a need to bring Noel to huge crowds and get acquainted with public spheres. It ranged from watching the Hockey Men's final to practising golf at Tolly Club. In line, swimming was no exception. The quiet surrender helped Noel win the freestyle swimming race. The victory was a delight for Debashis Paul after a series of attempts to get Noel to swim.

The quiet surrender of Debashis Paul over the tantrum acts of breaking the glassware Noel's dad made Noel never repeat. As a sensible young man, Noel had the sense to ask for forgiveness and never repeat the act. Noel's life taught readers one stern lesson from the beginning: not all attempts have to succeed. There can be a series of downfalls, but the courage to try again must remain the top priority, with an enlivening spirit within humans.

Noel grew up to be an integrated teen. His former restless gestures over changes in routine faded as Noel became a sensible young man. Noelism is favoured by generous attachments. These generous attachments were exemplified by his favourite teacher, Hari, who later left for a job in Abu Dhabi, Tany, a beloved friend, and Evonne, a paying guest. It was true with Amar. Amar made a lasting mark as a golf teacher. Amar's heart recognised Noel as a gifted child whose change resulted from infinite kindness, love, and faith. These people were strangers at first, but they left imprints on Noel's heart. These occasional strangers turned acquaintances and made Noel feel remembered, valued, and important in their lives. This was the meaningful endeavour that Noel's Dad, Debashis Paul, wished for and wanted.

The world could no longer hold Noel, and he bid his final goodbye. Since then, Debashis Paul has commemorated the lively life of our love warrior Noel in this world. This book, I have Autism, and I play Bad Tennis, is the epitome of a warrior whose life reflected joy and love at every step. Overall, Noelism is a defining expression for people who are love warriors. Noel took his heavenly abode on 13th November 2019. After a life that left its mark on every trait of Noelism, he stands as an epitome of kindness, love, and joy. Debashis Paul grieved the loss of his beloved son, Noel. However, Debashis Paul realised that Noel's life had so many lessons that needed to be shared with people from various walks of life in the nooks and corners of the world. This realisation culminated in this wonderful handy book, I have Autism, *and I play Bad Tennis*. As long as readers read this book as a memoir, Noel's life would be in rhythm to our ears.

Reference

Paul, Debashis. *I Have Autism and I Like to Play Bad Tennis: Vignettes and Insights from My Son's Life*. Westland Non-fiction, 2023.