

## What's normal, after all?



Gundula Rath-Bingart  
**Darling Ronja**  
[Geliebte Ronja]  
Our child has Down's  
syndrome

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Even as a philosophy, history and Islamic studies undergraduate, Gundula Rath-Bingart, born in 1985, had a profound interest in current debates around pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. She left university shortly before graduating to pursue a more practical skill: She qualified as a chef, and spent several years working in award-winning restaurants. Gundula Rath started the blog *Geliebte Ronja* when she found out that her daughter would be born with trisomy 21, as well as a heart defect. [www.geliebte-ronja.com/blog](http://www.geliebte-ronja.com/blog)

"Your child has a so-called atrioventricular septal defect, and we can see three copies of chromosome 21. So it's definitely Down's syndrome. Ronja will need a heart operation within the first few months."

This is the diagnosis Gundula Rath received when she was twenty-four weeks pregnant. At first there was shock, grief and irrational feelings of guilt – but she soon developed an intense bond with, and love for, her unborn daughter.

When the parents decide not to have an abortion, some people around them react with sheer disbelief. This experience prompted the mother to put her life with Ronja into words, and she started the blog *geliebte-ronja.com*. Here, she tells us about her eventful, happy, sometimes difficult, but also entirely normal life with Ronja, and intelligently reflects on our society's attitude to children with special needs.