



Social and Emotional Side of Dyslexia

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Video to
Play.



Today Bill Mankins is an expert in military intelligence. Listen to what he says is the worst thing about having dyslexia. What does he say?

Almost as soon as a dyslexic child enters a classroom, he is confronted by that gap between his intelligence and his ability to succeed in school at meet others' expectations.

“these children will make many "careless" or "stupid" mistakes. This is extremely frustrating to them, as it makes them feel chronically inadequate.” – Dr. Michael Ryan

Huge variations in abilities and weaknesses create a roller coaster effect and lack of confidence about what they can and cannot do.

Some respond by withdrawing from activities. Others respond by become anxious, depressed, or angry or various mixtures of all three.

“The dyslexic's self-image appears to be extremely vulnerable to frustration and anxiety. According to Erik Erikson, during the first years of school, every child must resolve the conflicts between a positive self-image and feelings of inferiority. If children succeed in school, they will develop positive feelings about themselves and believe that they can succeed in life.

If children meet failure and frustration, they learn that they are inferior to others, and that their effort makes very little difference. Instead of feeling powerful and productive, they learn that their environment controls them. They feel powerless and incompetent.

Researchers have learned that when typical learners succeed, they credit their own efforts for their success. When they fail, they tell themselves to try harder. However, when the dyslexic succeeds, he is likely to attribute his success to luck. When he fails, he simply sees himself as stupid.” – Dr Michael Ryan



Research also suggests that these feelings of inferiority develop by the **age of ten**. After this age, it becomes extremely difficult to help the child develop a positive self-image. This is a powerful argument for early intervention.

How to Help

“My experiences suggest that in addition to factors such as intelligence and socio-economic status, other things affect the dyslexic’s chances for success.

First, early in the child’s life, someone has been extremely supportive and encouraging. Second, the young dyslexic found an area in which he or she could succeed. Finally, successful dyslexics appear to have developed a commitment to helping others. Both teachers and parents need to offer consistent, ongoing encouragement and support. However, one rarely hears about this very important way to help youngsters.

I believe encouragement involves at least four elements. First, listening to children’s feelings. Anxiety, anger and depression are daily companions for dyslexics. However, their language problems often make it difficult for them to express their feelings. Therefore, adults must help them learn to talk about their feelings.

“Teachers and parents must reward effort, not just “the product”. For the dyslexic, grades should be less important than progress. When confronting unacceptable behavior, adults must not inadvertently discourage the dyslexic child. Words such as “lazy” or “incorrigible” can seriously damage the child’s self-image.

Finally, it is important to help students set realistic goals for themselves. Most dyslexic students set perfectionistic and unattainable goals. By helping the child set an attainable goal, teachers can change the cycle of failure.

Even more important, the child needs to recognize and rejoice in his or her successes. To do so, he or she needs to achieve success in some area of life. In some cases, the dyslexic’s strengths are obvious, and many dyslexics’ self-esteem has been salvaged by prowess in athletics, art, or mechanics. However, the dyslexic’s strengths are often more subtle and less obvious. Parents and teachers need to find ways to relate the child’s interests to the demands of real life.

Finally, many successful dyslexic adults deal with their own pain by reaching out to others. They may do volunteer work for charities or churches, or choose vocations that require empathy and a social conscience. These experiences help dyslexics feel more positive about themselves and deal more effectively with their pain and frustration.”



Dr. Michael Ryan

How to Help

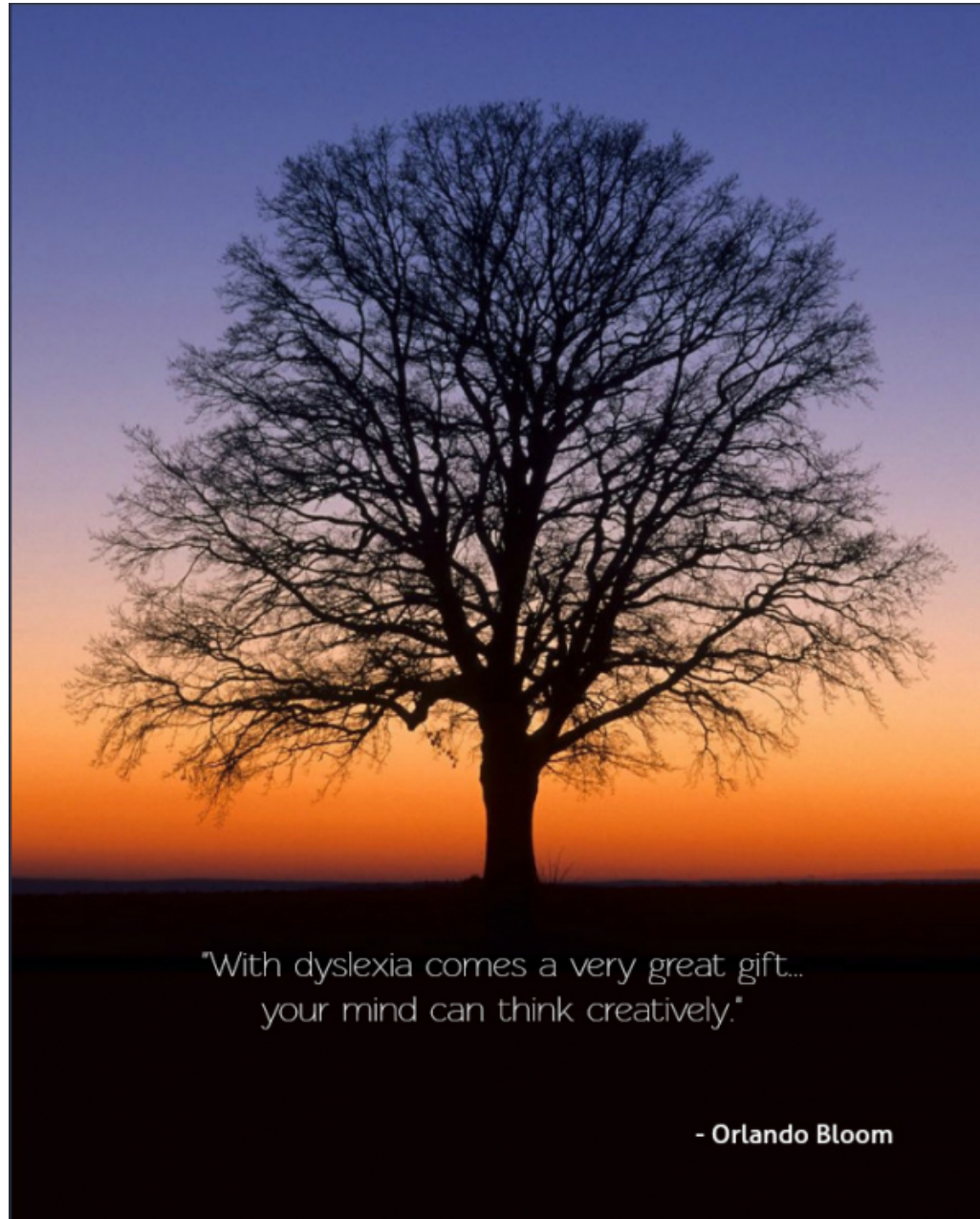
- Be **supportive and encouraging**
- **Find an area where a student can succeed** – is it sports, friendships, building, arts, or music?
- Listen to feelings of frustration, anxiety, or anger and realize that they may be experiencing much more than they can easily express
- **Can a positive role model visit class?** An author who's dyslexic or perhaps a parent?
- What about a motivational poster or quote?
- **Reward effort and not the final product; don't emphasize comparisons in your classroom culture. Praise good ideas.**
- **Avoid negative labeling**
- **Set realistic goals and help reframe challenges**
- Are challenges **temporary or permanent? global or specific? changeable or unchanging?** (from *The Optimistic Child*)



How to Help

- **Don't overschedule.** Plan for downtime and time to pursue personal interests for their own sake
- Recognize that older students and adults may be susceptible to **Imposter Syndrome** – a feeling that they are imposters or that they don't deserve success that they have. Imposter syndrome can lead people to limit goals and be burdened with self-doubt, fear, or anxiety.
- One of the best ways to help imposter syndrome is to put a name on it and **recognize** that it's possible to **change how to respond** to those feelings.
- Mindfulness, Resilience Teaching, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for some





"With dyslexia comes a very great gift...
your mind can think creatively."

- Orlando Bloom

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



I can learn anything I want to.
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
I want to challenge myself.
When I fail, I learn.
Tell me I try hard.
If you succeed, I'm inspired.
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.
When I'm frustrated, I give up.
I don't like to be challenged.
When I fail, I'm no good.
Tell me I'm smart.
If you succeed, I feel threatened.
My abilities determine everything.

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*"In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to
struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable
obstacles and inequities of life."*

- Albert Bandura

50 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE A CHILD

1. (Thumbs up)
2. You're on the right track now.
3. You've worked so hard on that.
4. I heard you say how you feel, that's great.
5. Oh, that turned out very well.
6. That's coming along nicely.
7. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
8. You've just about got it.
9. That's the best you've ever done.
10. You stayed so calm during that problem.
11. That's it!
12. Now you've figured it out!
13. That's quite an improvement.
14. I knew you could do it.
15. Congratulations!
16. I love hearing your words.
17. What a super star you are.
18. You solved the problem!
19. Keep working on it, you're almost there!
20. Now you have it!
21. Your brain must be working hard, you figured that out quickly.
22. I'll bet you are proud of yourself.
23. One more time and you'll have it.
24. Great idea!
25. You're amazing!
26. Terrific teamwork!
27. Nothing can stop you now.
28. You have such creative ideas.
29. That's the way to do it.
30. Sensational!
31. You must have been practicing.
32. You handled that so well.
33. I like how you think.
34. Good remembering.
35. You know just what to do!
36. You are really persisting with this.
37. You expressed yourself so well.
38. You did it!
39. I knew you two could figure it out together.
40. Excellent job saying how you feel.
41. I know it's hard, but you are almost there.
42. Fantastic problem solving!
43. I love hearing your ideas.
44. I know that was hard for you, but you stayed so calm.
45. Yes!
46. Look at how you helped each other!
47. You finished faster because you worked together.
48. You kept trying!
49. Excellent try.
50. You are a creative thinker.

<https://signewhitson.com/2015/07/50-ways-to-encourage-a-child/>

One Story

Jack was in the 2nd or 3rd grade when he realized something was wrong. He was struggling with getting his letters to face the right way and he couldn't remember his math facts. Although he was identified with dyslexia, the tutors working with him didn't know how to improve his challenges. He bumped around different schools and came to the conclusion he wasn't one of the "smart kids".

A revolution in his thinking came in his junior year of high school – and to this date he keeps in touch with two teachers he said completely turned him around.

“I had good ideas. I just couldn’t spell them right. That was huge for me...

They weren’t correcting my spelling. They would comment on my thought process...

It would take forever to do things, but for these two teachers, I would’ve done anything...

They opened up the door and I went through and started running...”

Teachers Making a Difference



John Muir Laws, Award-winning naturalist, illustrator, educator.
B.S. UC Berkeley M.S. U Montana, Biological Illustration UC Santa Cruz

More Teachers Who Made a Difference

"Mr. Rock, who was my music teacher, believed that I would achieve something; but everyone else told me I wouldn't achieve anything," – actor Henry Winkler

"In 1991, a college professor asked me if I was "retarded". That same year Professor Ballew told me that I had "presence," and asked me to join the speech team. Professor Ballew focused on my strengths, and helped me to acknowledge and confront my challenges." – LAVC Professor Duane Smith

"This story honors the teacher that took time to see a child that was drowning and needed help...Mr. Falker had reached into the most lonely darkness and pulled me into bright sunlight...I shall never forget him..." – Children's book author Patricia Polacco

What Will YOU DO?

1. What did you think about Bill Mankin's video? What did he say is the worst thing about having dyslexia? Do you agree with him and would you have any advice to fellow teachers based on what he said?
2. You're talking to a dyslexic student in your class after school one day and he seems very discouraged and is saying a lot of negative comments about himself. What are 3 things you can do or say that might help him?
3. What is the difference between growth and a fixed mindset and how do think this concept could help students free themselves from self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.

Thanks for taking this class! I'm excited about how you'll be able to encourage and education the next generation of dyslexic students!

If you have any questions that arise in the future, please feel free to get in touch with me at drseide@dyslexicadvantage.org and I will always try to help. :)